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Hannegan

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(54) **CEMENT PULSATION FOR SUBSEA WELLBORE**

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(51) **Int. Cl.**

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E21B 33/14	(2006.01)
E21B 19/09	(2006.01)
E21B 21/10	(2006.01)
E21B 21/08	(2006.01)
E21B 19/00	(2006.01)
E21B 33/12	(2006.01)
E21B 34/06	(2006.01)
E21B 28/00	(2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC ***E21B 33/143*** (2013.01); ***E21B 19/002*** (2013.01); ***E21B 28/00*** (2013.01); ***E21B 33/12*** (2013.01); ***E21B 33/14*** (2013.01); ***E21B 34/06*** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

None

See application file for complete search history.

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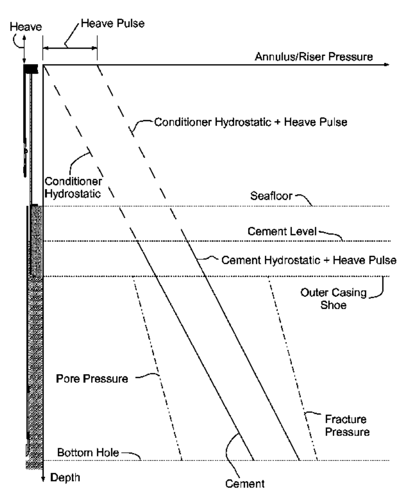
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method for cementing a tubular string into a wellbore from a drilling unit includes: running the tubular string into the wellbore using a workstring; hanging the tubular string from a wellhead or from a lower portion of a casing string set in the wellbore; and pumping cement slurry through the workstring and tubular string and into an annulus formed between the tubular string and the wellbore. The method further includes, during thickening of the cement slurry: circulating a liquid or mud through a loop closed by a seal engaged with an outer surface of the workstring, the closed loop being in fluid communication with the annulus, and periodically choking the liquid or mud, thereby pulsing the cement slurry.

26 Claims, 15 Drawing Sheets



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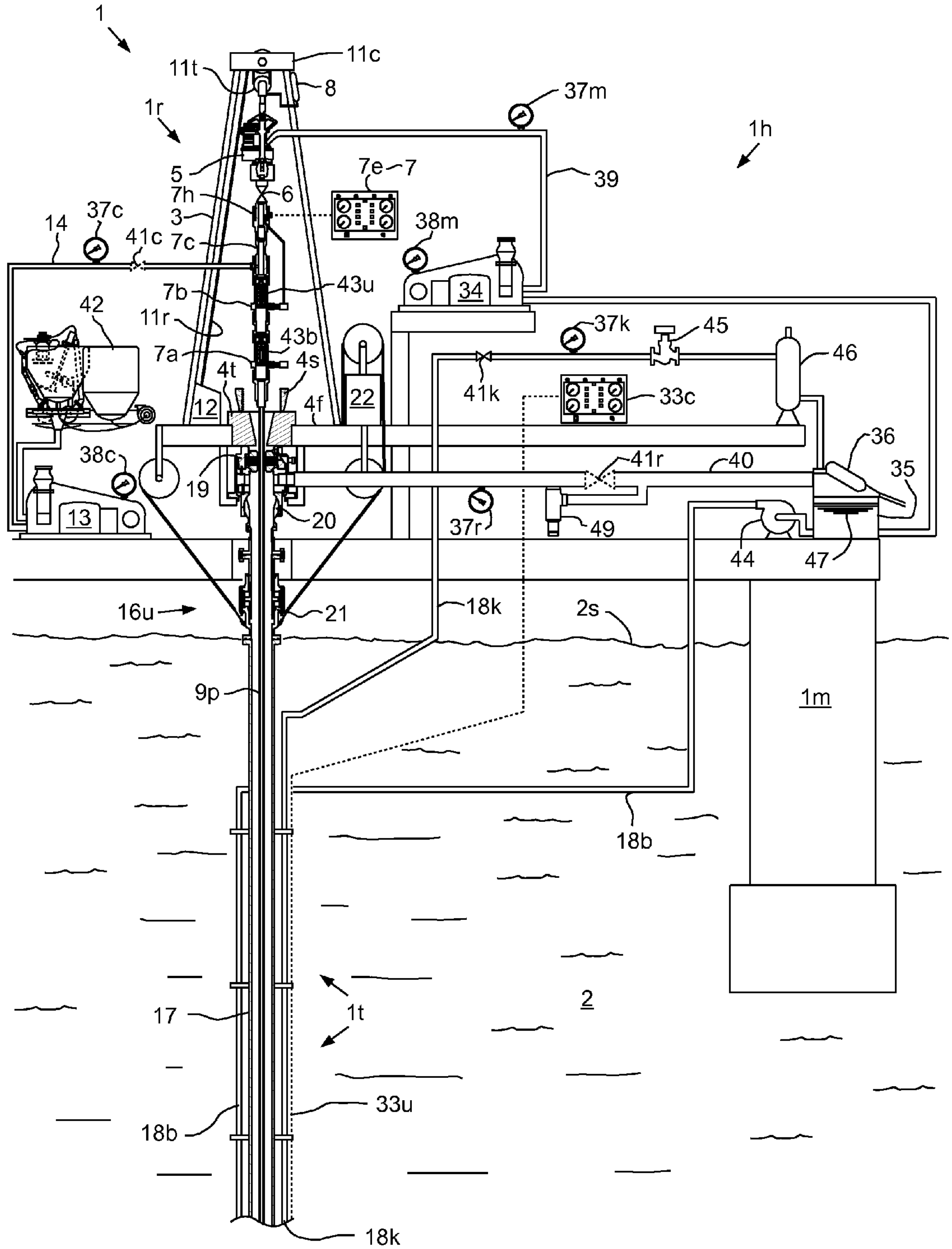
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11t
8
37m
1r
1h
5
39
7e
7
7h
6
3
38m
14
37c
41c
7c
34
43u
7b
42
11r
37k
45
43b
7a
4s
46
4t
41k
12
22
4f
33c
36
38c
41r
40
35
19
37r
49
13
20
44
47
18k
2s
16u
21
9p
1m
18b
2
17
1t
33u
18b
18k

FIG. 1A

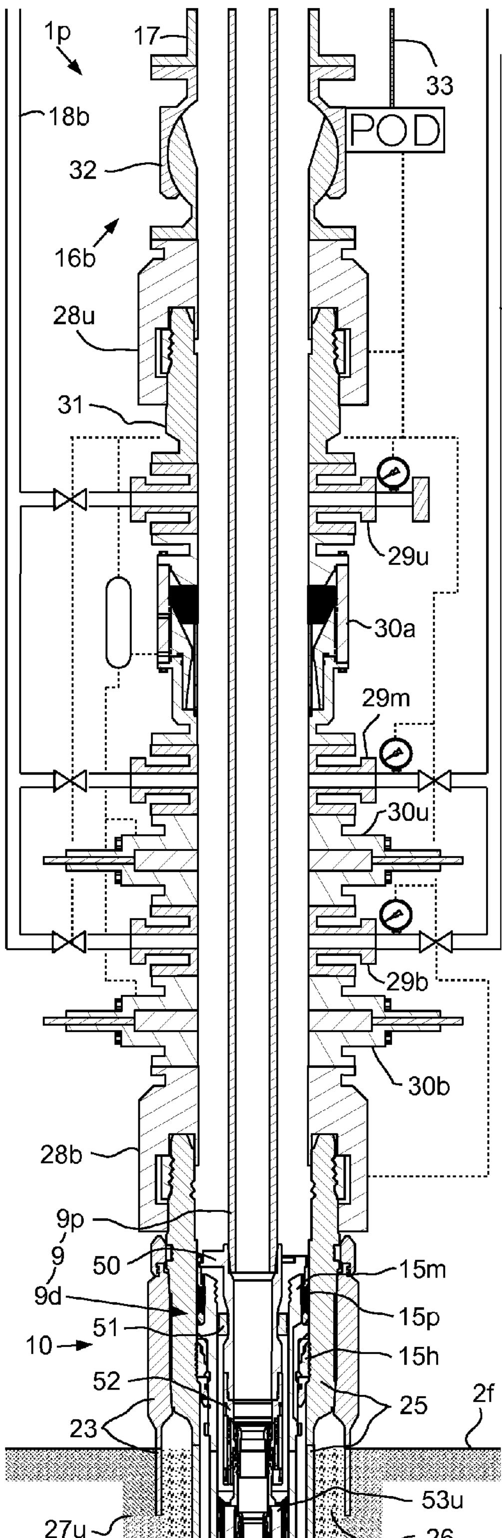
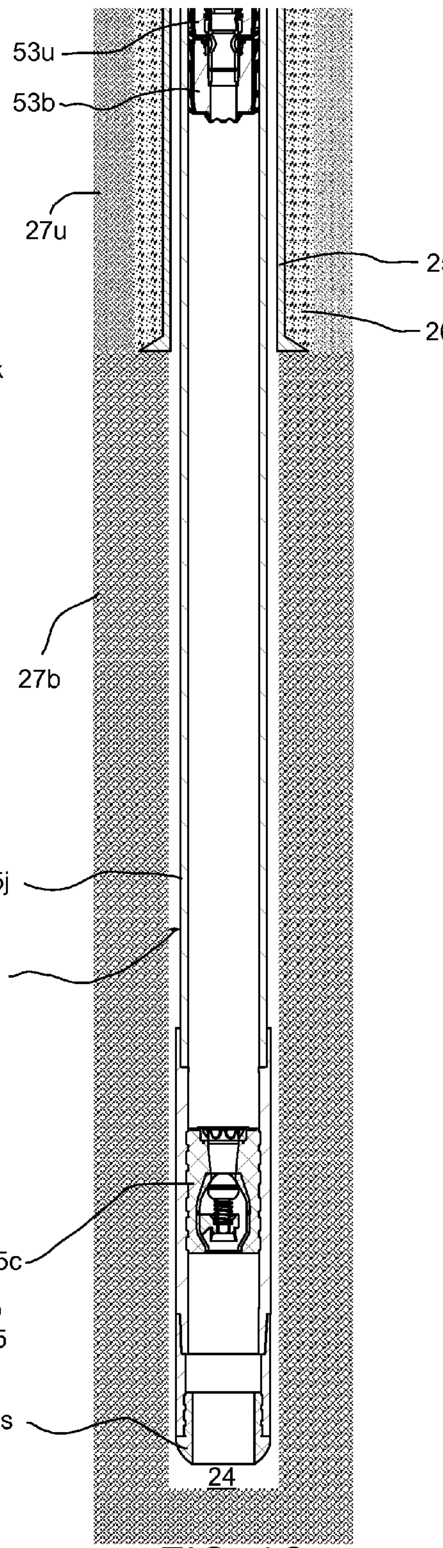

1p
17
33
POD
18b
32
16b
28u
18k
31
29u
30a
29m
30u
15j
29b
30b
28b
9p
9
50
15m
9d
15p
51
10
15h
52
25
2f
23
53u
27u
26

FIG. 1B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53b
27u
25
26
27b
15j
48
15c
15
15s
24

FIG. 1C

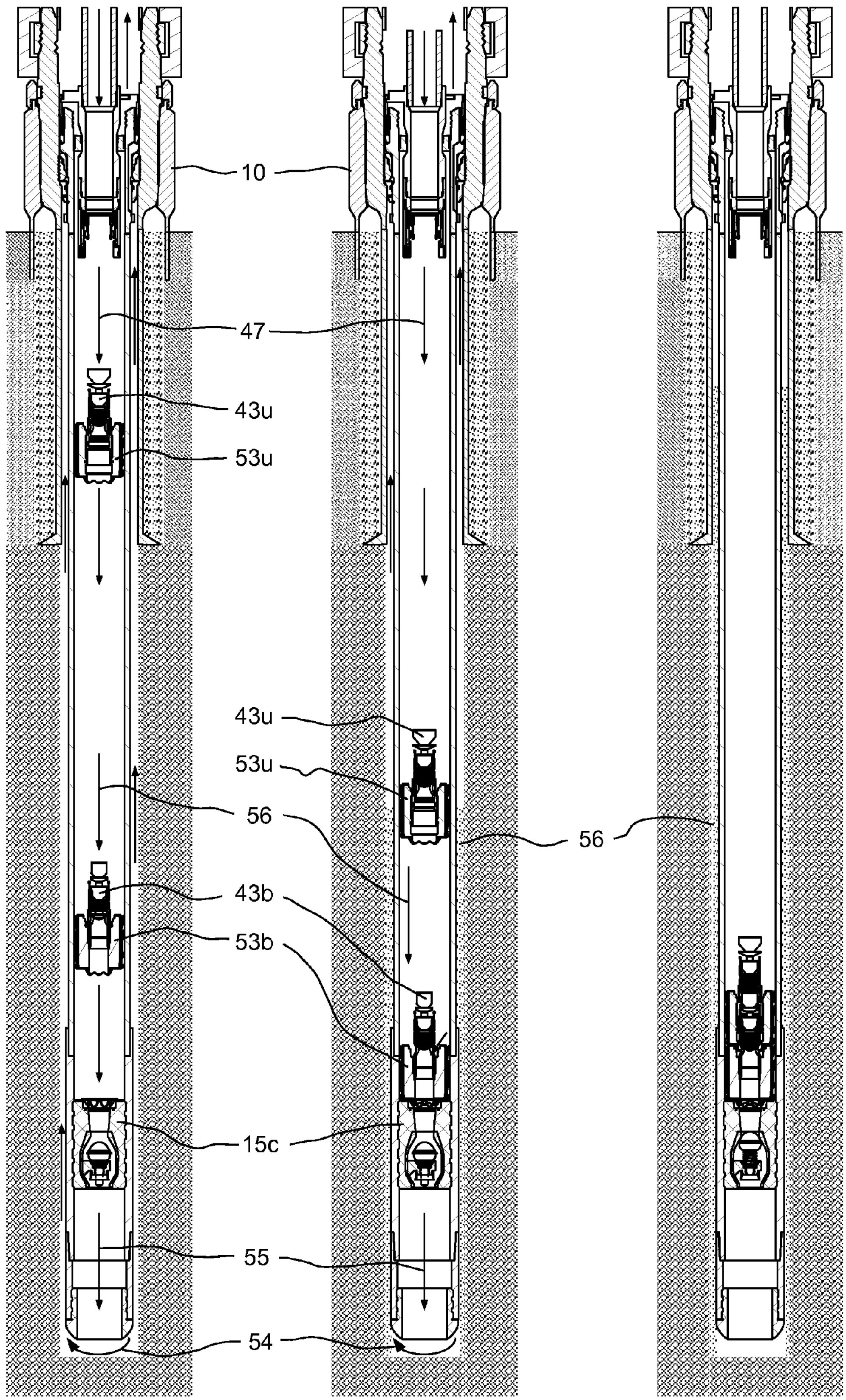


FIG. 2A FIG. 2B FIG. 2C

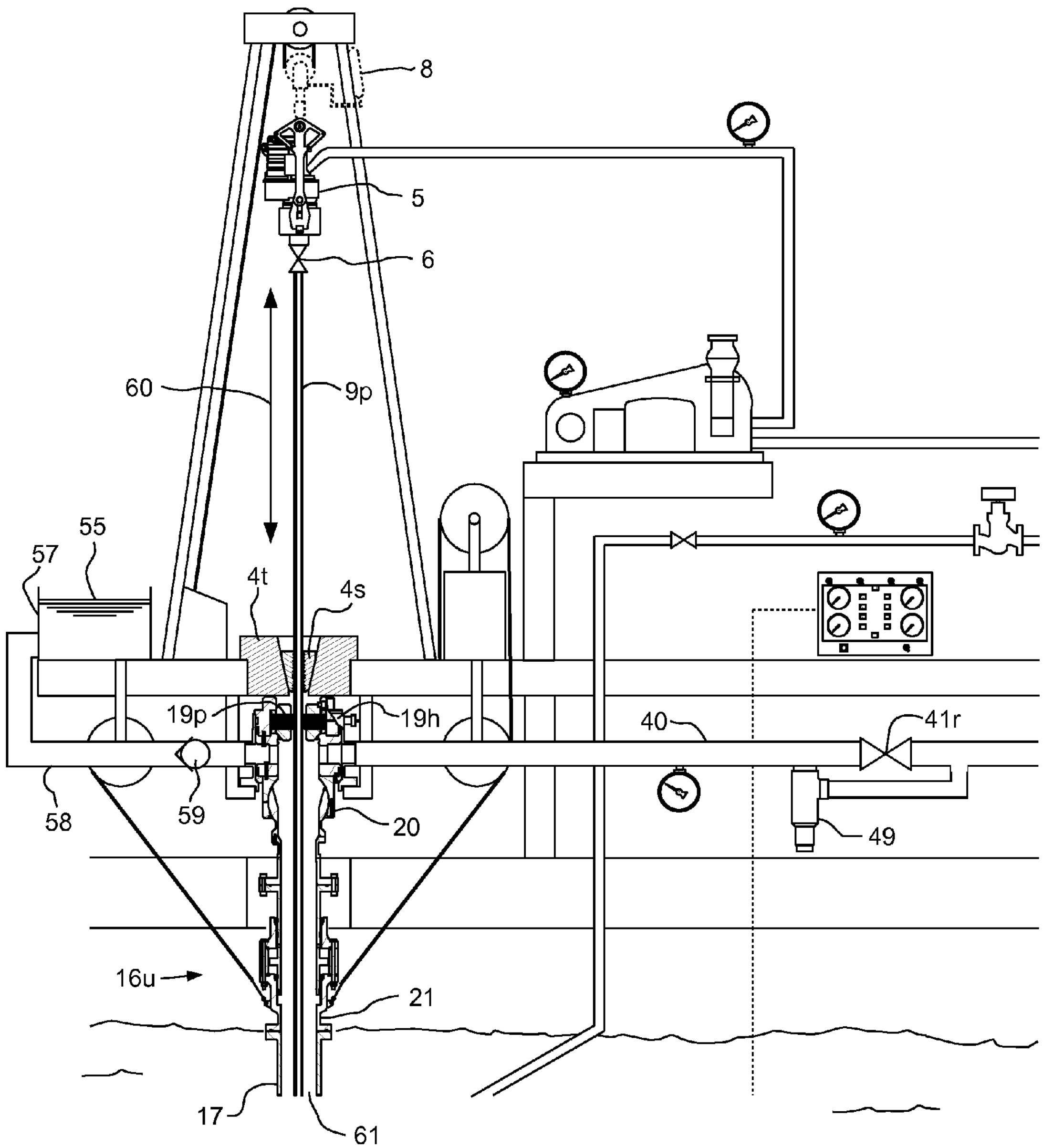


FIG. 3A

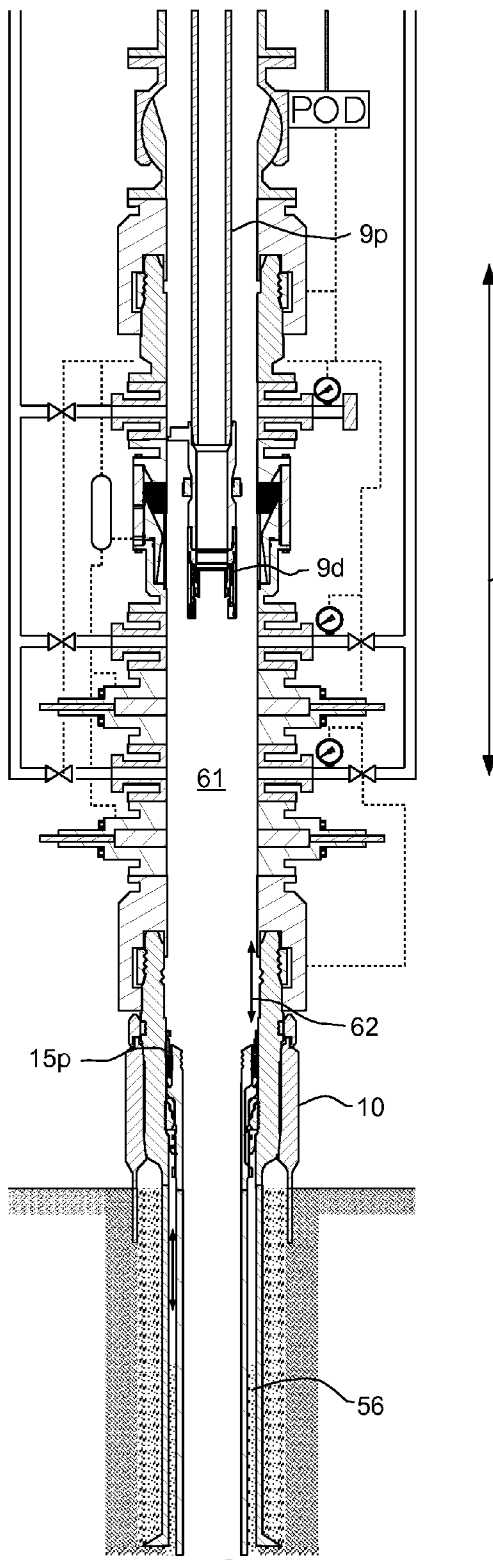


FIG. 3B

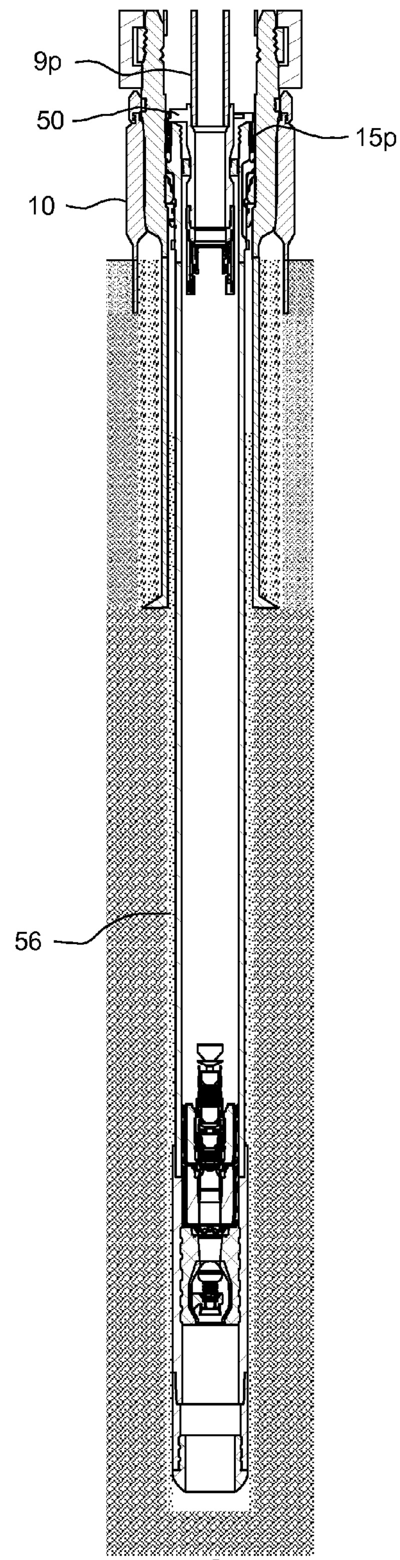


FIG. 4

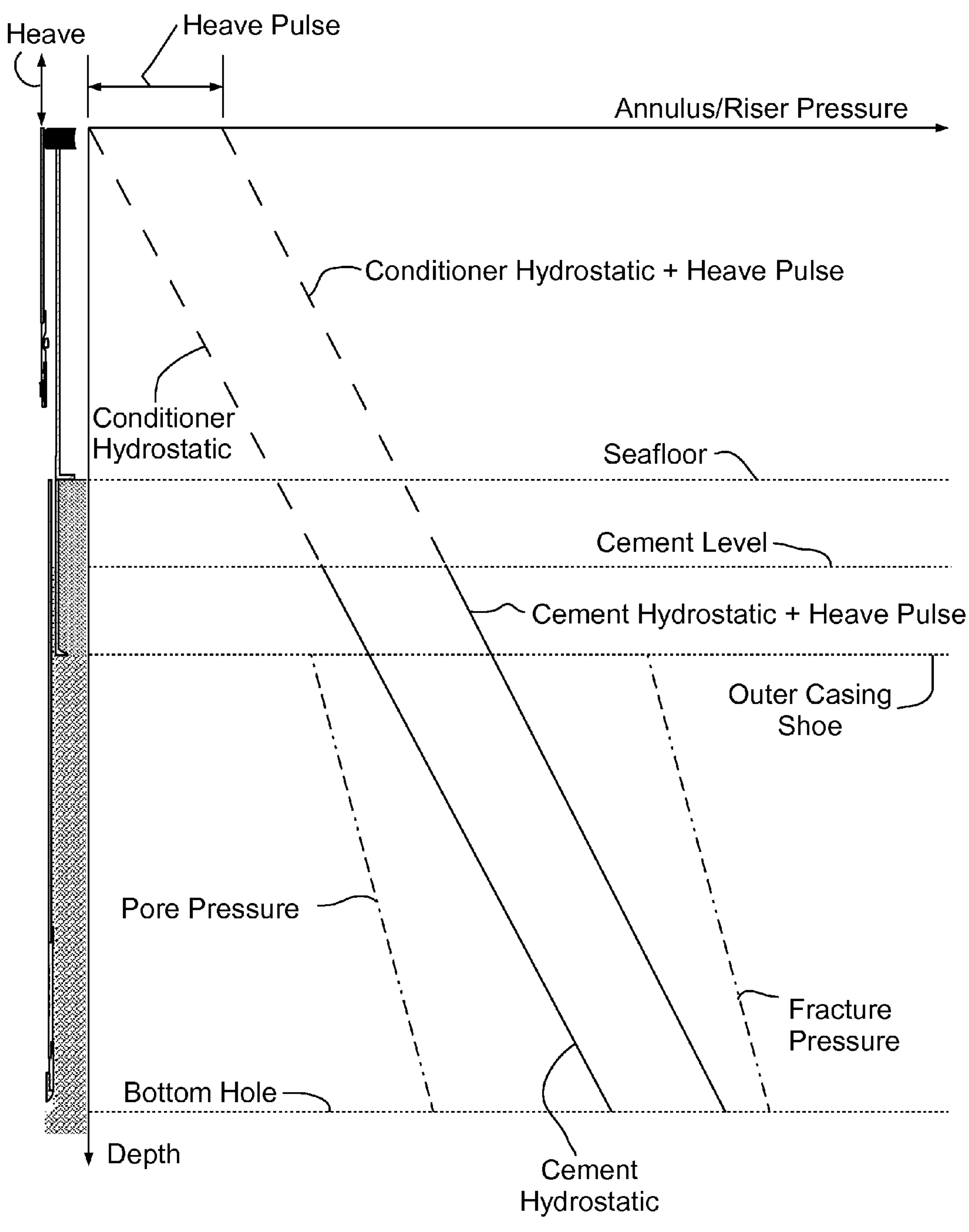

Heave
Heave Pulse
Annulus/Riser Pressure
Conditioner Hydrostatic + Heave Pulse
Conditioner Hydrostatic
Seafloor
Cement Level
Cement Hydrostatic + Heave Pulse
Outer Casing Shoe
Pore Pressure
Fracture Pressure
Bottom Hole
Depth
Cement Hydrostatic

FIG. 3C

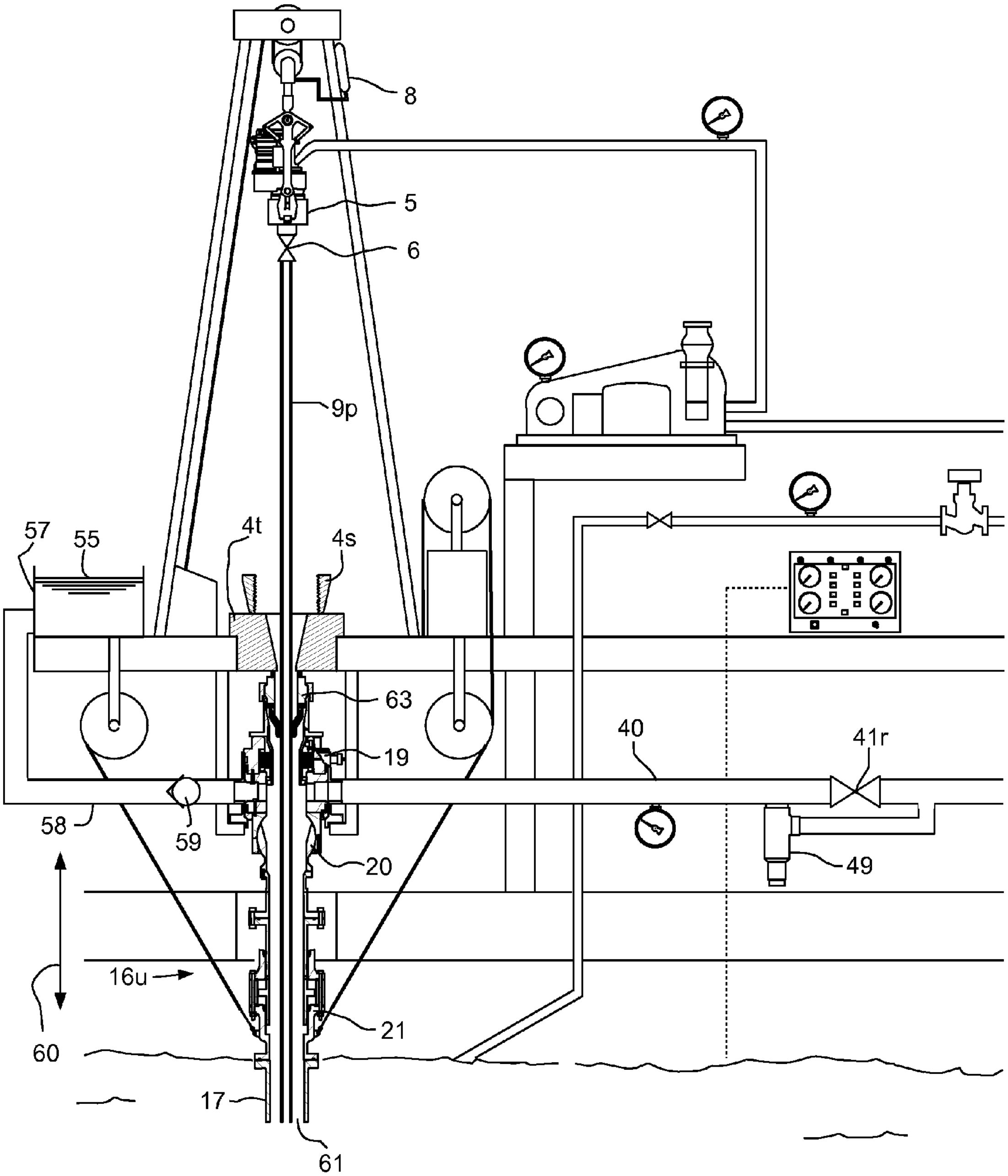
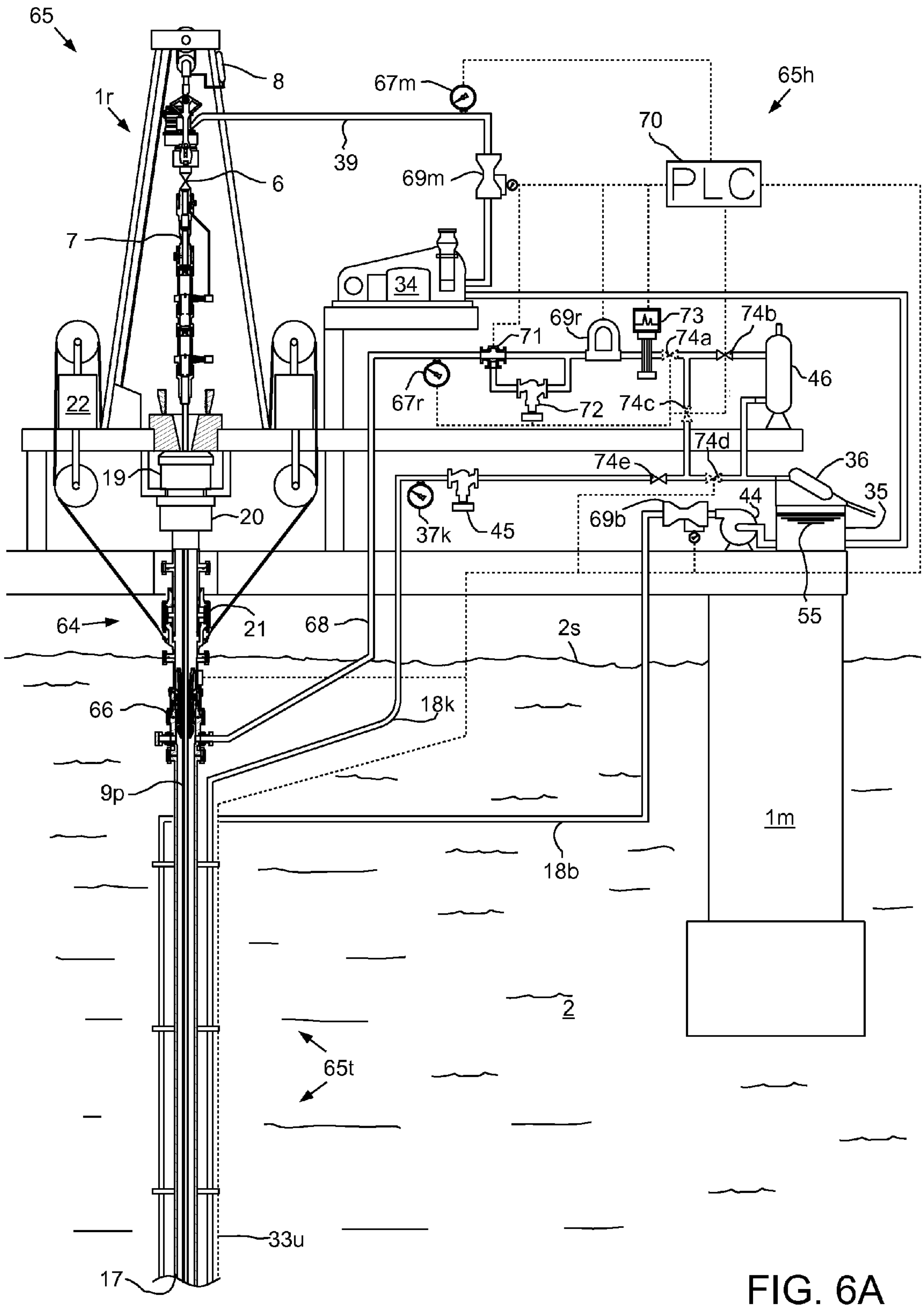


FIG. 5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8
67m
65h
70
39
69m
PLC
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7
34
69r
73
74b
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74a
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67r
74c
72
22
74d
74e
36
19
35
44
69b
37k
45
20
55
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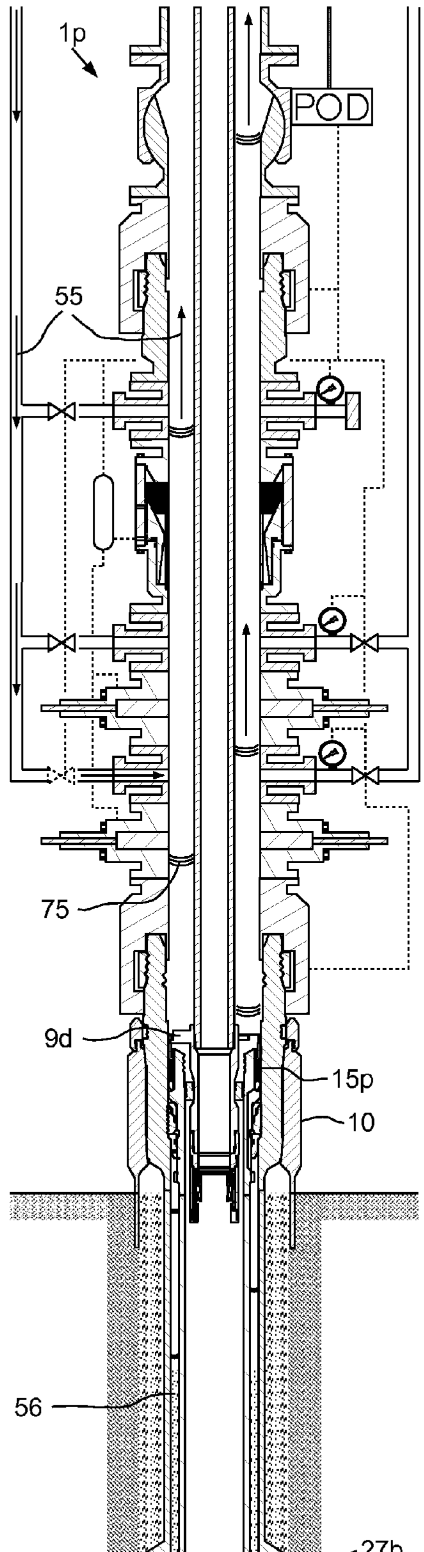
21
68
2s
66
18k
9p
1m
18b
2
65t
33u
17

FIG. 6A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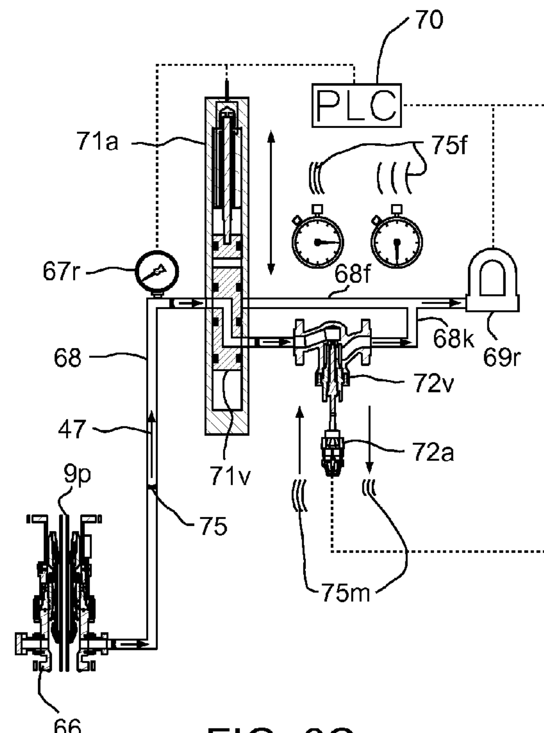
56
27b
FIG. 6B


70
PLC
71a
75f
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68f
68
68k
69r
72v
47
72a
9p
71v
75
75m
66
FIG. 6C

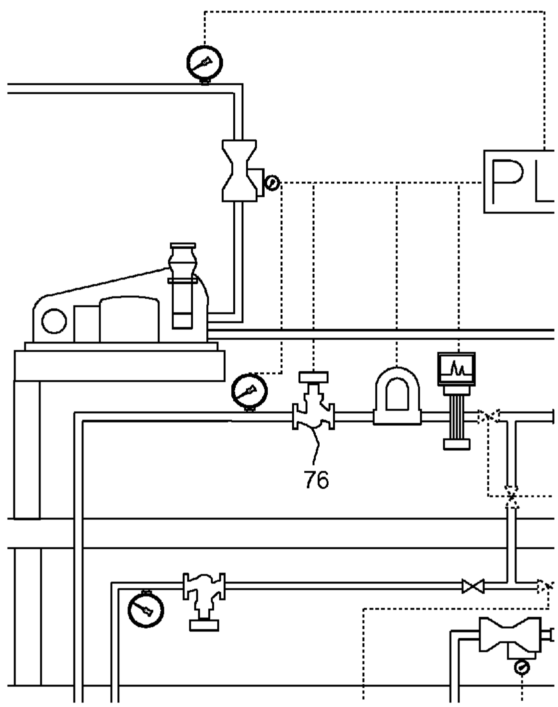


FIG. 7A

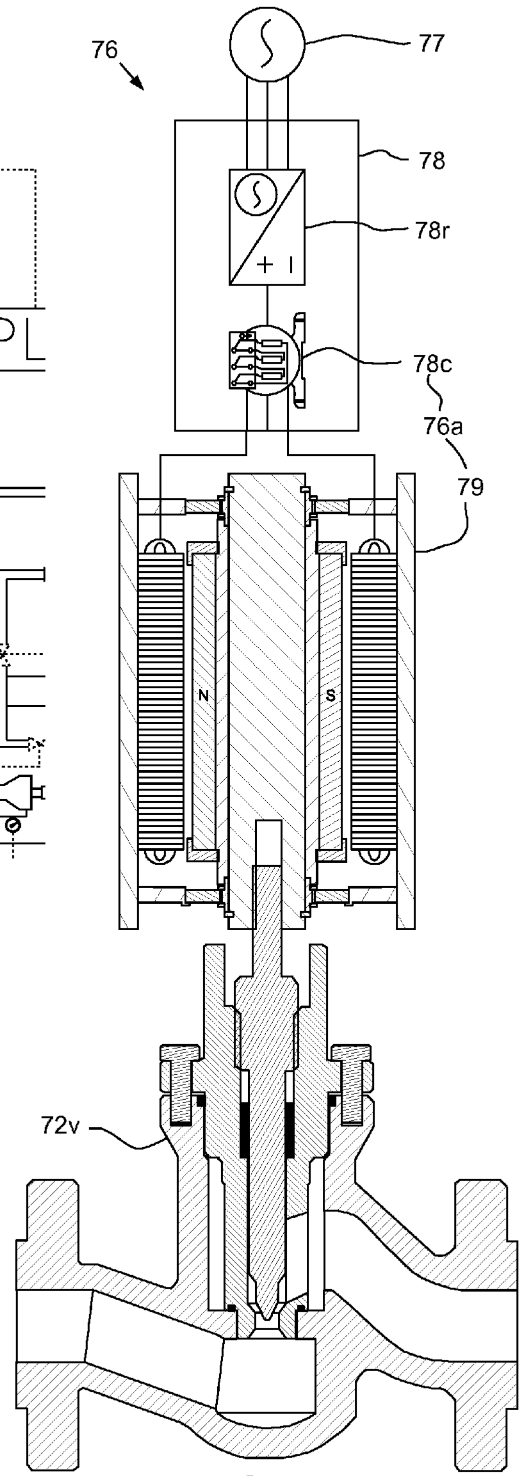
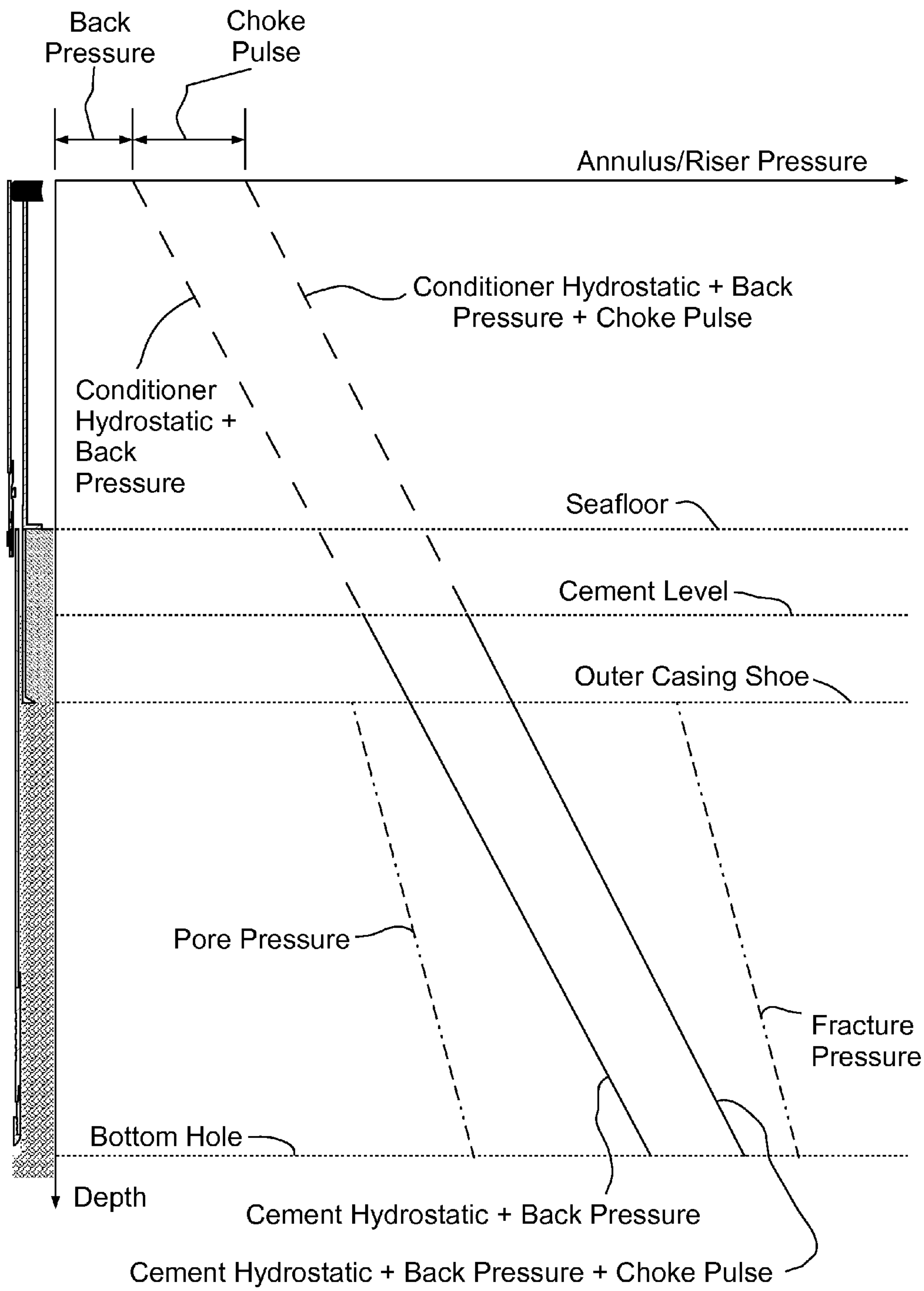


FIG. 7B



Back Pressure
Choke Pulse
Annulus/Riser Pressure
Conditioner Hydrostatic + Back Pressure + Choke Pulse
Conditioner Hydrostatic + Back Pressure
Seafloor
Cement Level
Outer Casing Shoe
Pore Pressure
Fracture Pressure
Bottom Hole
Depth
Cement Hydrostatic + Back Pressure
Cement Hydrostatic + Back Pressure + Choke Pulse

FIG. 7C

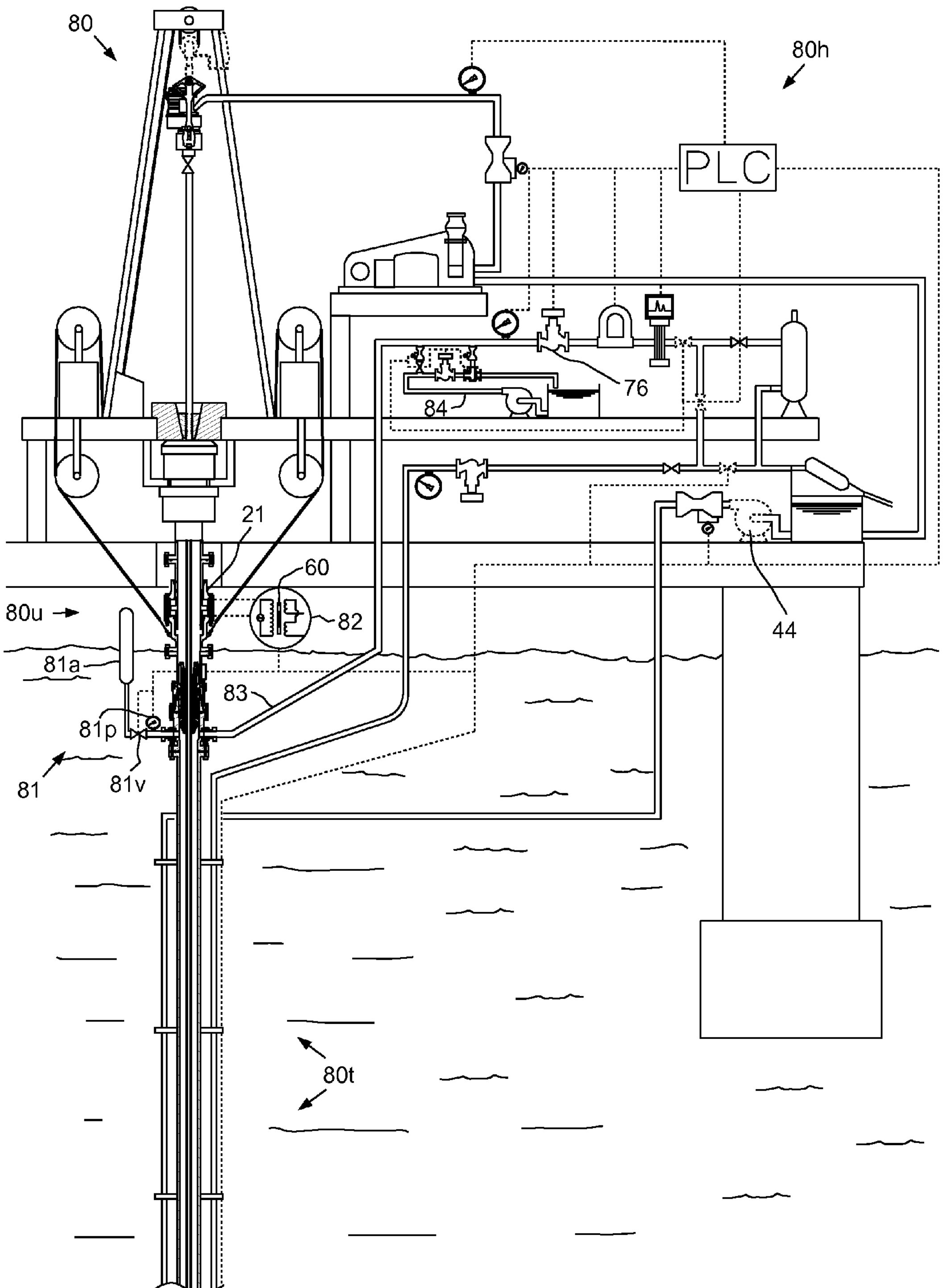
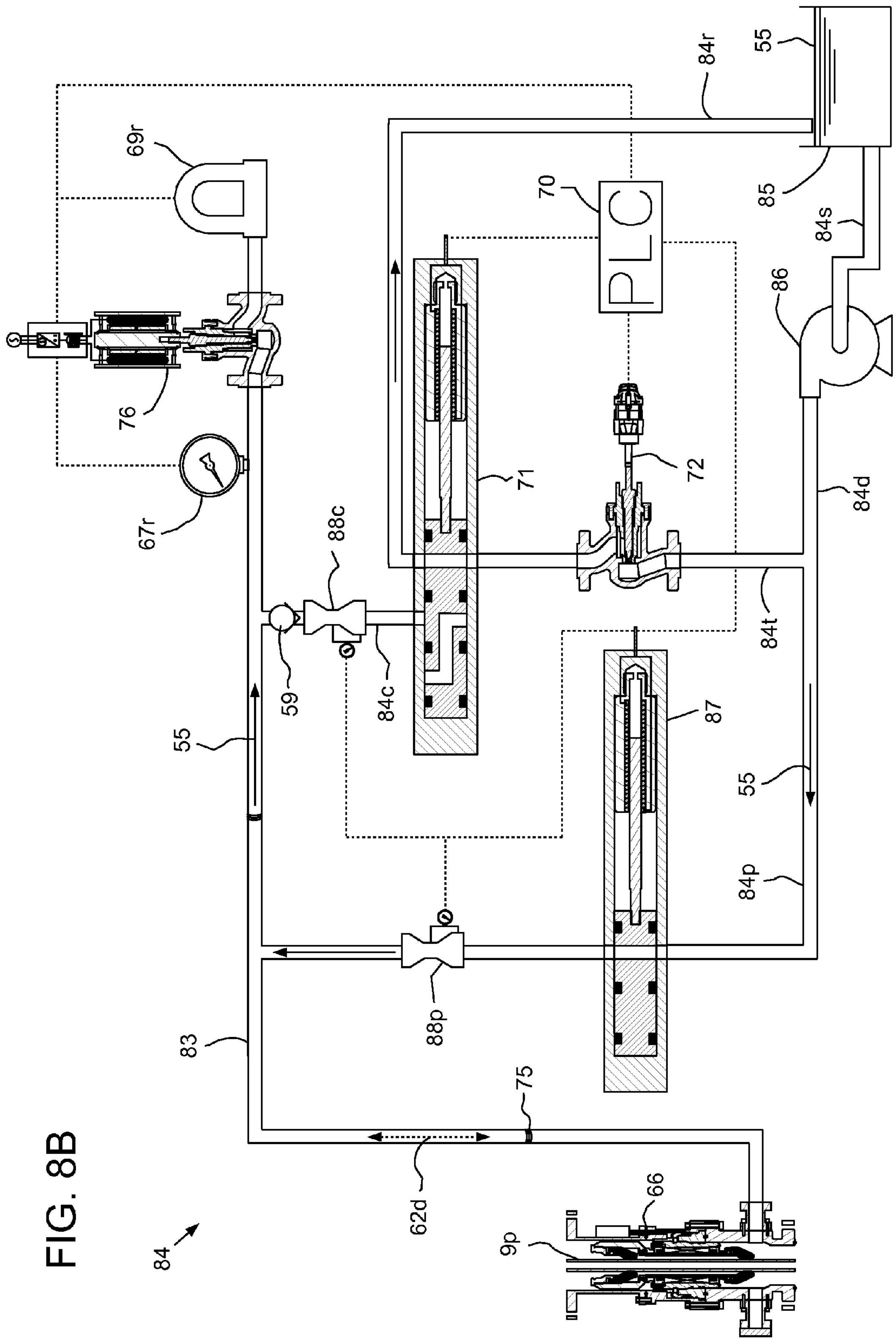


FIG. 8A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84r
85
84s
86
69r
70
PLC
76
71
72
84d
67r
88c
59
84c
84t
87
55
55
84p
88p
83
75
62d
66
9p
84

FIG. 8B

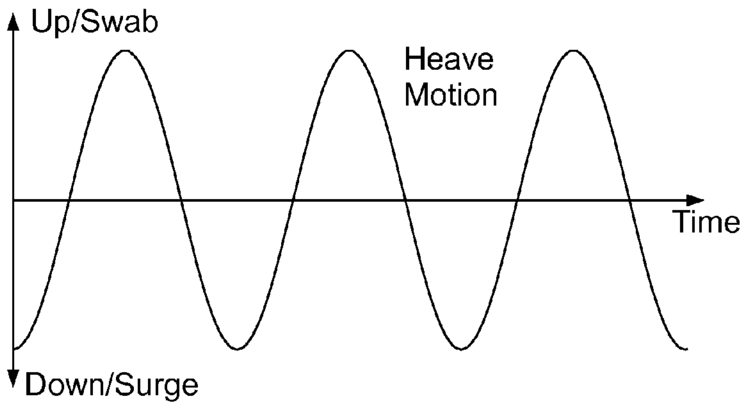


FIG. 8C

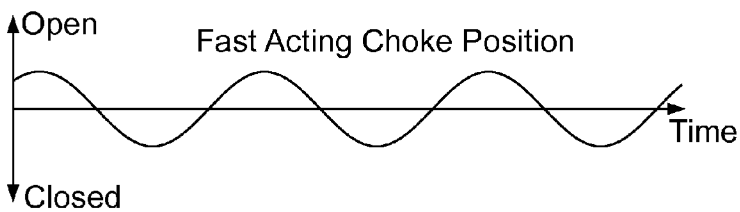


FIG. 8D

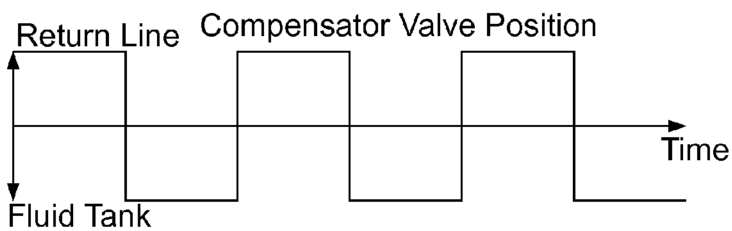


FIG. 8E

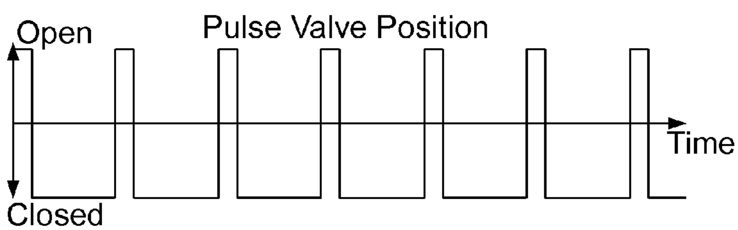


FIG. 8F

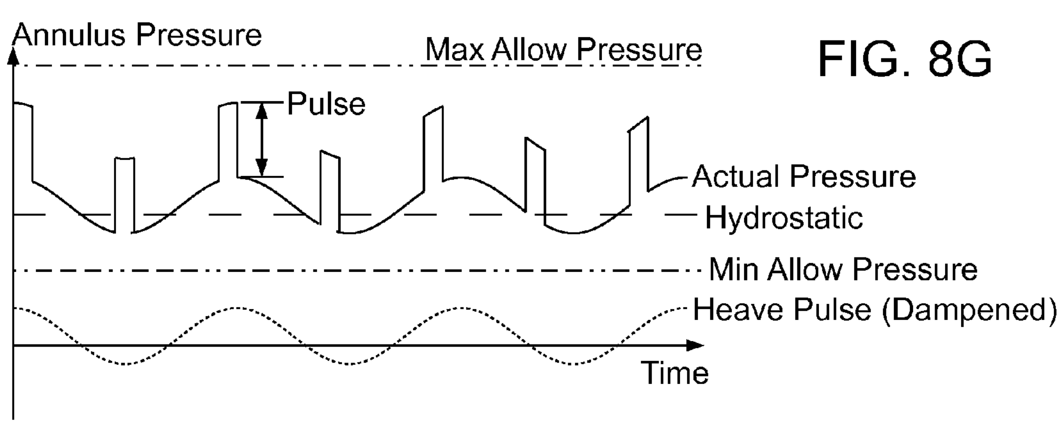
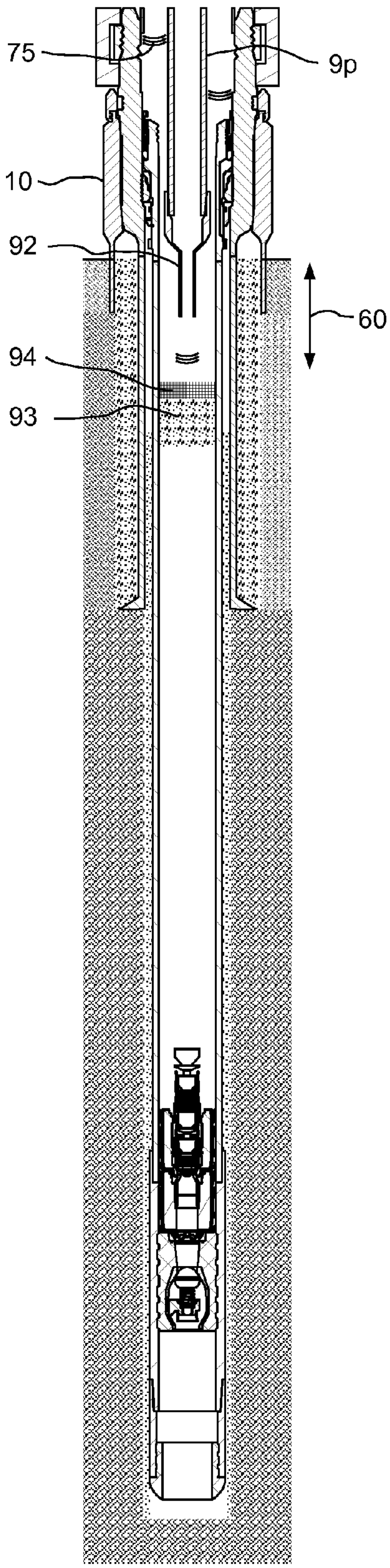


FIG. 8G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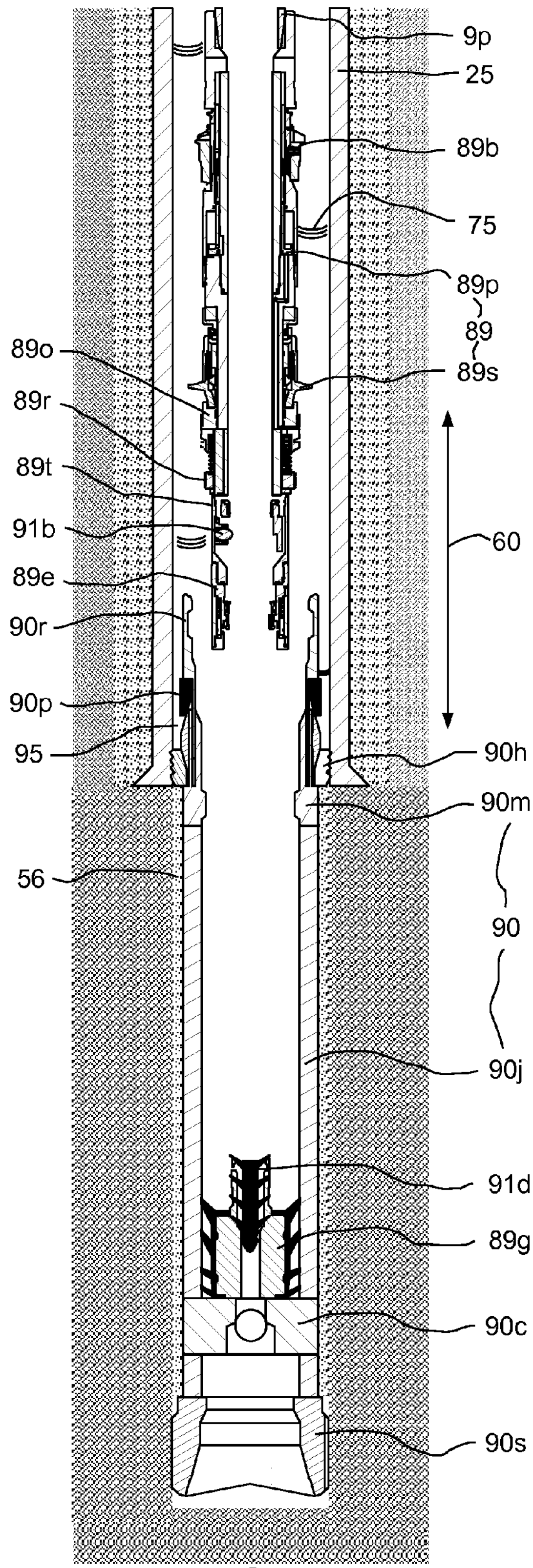
9p
10
92
60
94
93

FIG. 9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25
89b
75
89p
89
89s
89o
89r
89t
91b
89e
90r
90p
95
60
90h
90m
56
90
90j
91d
89g
90c
90s

FIG. 10

CEMENT PULSATION FOR SUBSEA WELLBORE

BACKGROUND OF THE DISCLOSURE

1. Field of the Disclosure

The present disclosure generally relates to cement pulsation for a subsea wellbore.

2. Description of the Related Art

A wellbore is formed to access hydrocarbon bearing formations, such as crude oil and/or natural gas, by the use of drilling. Drilling is accomplished by utilizing a drill bit that is mounted on the end of a tubular string, such as a drill string. To drill within the wellbore to a predetermined depth, the drill string is often rotated by a top drive or rotary table on a surface platform or rig, and/or by a downhole motor mounted towards the lower end of the drill string. After drilling to a predetermined depth, the drill string and drill bit are removed and a section of casing is lowered into the wellbore. An annulus is thus formed between the string of casing and the formation. The casing string is cemented into the wellbore by circulating cement into the annulus defined between the outer wall of the casing and the borehole. The combination of cement and casing strengthens the wellbore and facilitates the isolation of certain areas of the formation behind the casing for the production of hydrocarbons.

It is common to employ more than one string of casing or liner in a wellbore. In this respect, the well is drilled to a first designated depth with a drill bit on a drill string. The drill string is removed. A first string of casing is then run into the wellbore and set in the drilled out portion of the wellbore, and cement is circulated into the annulus behind the casing string. Next, the well is drilled to a second designated depth, and a second string of casing or liner, is run into the drilled out portion of the wellbore. If the second string is a liner string, the liner is set at a depth such that the upper portion of the second string of casing overlaps the lower portion of the first string of casing. The liner string may then be hung off of the existing casing. The second casing or liner string is then cemented. This process is typically repeated with additional casing or liner strings until the well has been drilled to total depth. In this manner, wells are typically formed with two or more strings of casing/liner of an ever-decreasing diameter.

The migration of gas from a hydrocarbon bearing formation into the cement slurry may occur after the cement has been pumped, but before it has fully cured. The consequences include gas cut cement, sustained casing pressure, and/or blow outs to the surface. The control of gas migration is one of the most costly and challenging technical problems in well cementing. The basic cause of gas migration is believed to be the loss of hydrostatic pressure within the cement column as it makes the transformation from a liquid slurry to a solid. The development of gel strength in the static column of the curing cement slurry is primarily responsible for this loss of hydrostatic pressure. This loss of hydrostatic pressure allows an influx of gas before the cement slurry has completed the curing process.

Gas migration can be prevented if gelling of the cement slurry can be prevented or delayed until the cement slurry develops enough viscosity to prevent the movement of gas within the slurry. Gelling can be disrupted by mechanical agitation, such as by rotation of the casing or liner string. However, rotation must be stopped when the drag on the casing or liner string at the bottom of the well becomes too high and before torque builds to the point that the casing or liner string might be twisted off. This may occur before the cement slurry is viscous enough to prevent gas migration at shallower depths because the cement slurry tends to cure faster at the bottom of the wellbore due to the higher temperature. Gas pulsation has also been used to disrupt gelling in subterranean and shallow water wells having surface wellheads but is unsuitable for deeper wells having subsea wellheads due to the risk of riser collapse and/or buoyancy destabilization of the floating offshore drilling unit.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCLOSURE

The present disclosure generally relates to cement pulsation for a subsea wellbore. In one embodiment, a method for cementing a tubular string into a wellbore from a drilling unit includes: running the tubular string into the wellbore using a workstring; hanging the tubular string from a wellhead or from a lower portion of a casing string set in the wellbore; and pumping cement slurry through the workstring and tubular string and into an annulus formed between the tubular string and the wellbore. The method further includes, during thickening of the cement slurry: circulating a liquid or mud through a loop closed by a seal engaged with an outer surface of the workstring, the closed loop being in fluid communication with the annulus, and periodically choking the liquid or mud, thereby pulsing the cement slurry.

In another embodiment, a method for cementing a tubular string into a subsea wellbore from an offshore drilling unit includes: running the tubular string into the subsea wellbore using a workstring; hanging the tubular string from a subsea wellhead or from a lower portion of a casing string set in the subsea wellbore; pumping cement slurry through the workstring and tubular string and into an annulus formed between the tubular string and the subsea wellbore; closing a seal against an outer surface of the workstring and closing a return line, thereby forming a closed heave chamber in fluid communication with the annulus; and maintaining the closed heave chamber during thickening of the cement slurry, thereby utilizing heaving of the offshore drilling unit to pulsate the cement slurry.

In another embodiment, a method for cementing a tubular string into a subsea wellbore from an offshore drilling unit includes: running the tubular string into the subsea wellbore using a workstring having a deployment assembly; hanging the tubular string from a subsea wellhead or from a lower portion of a casing string set in the subsea wellbore; pumping cement slurry through the workstring and tubular string and into an annulus formed between the tubular string and the subsea wellbore; releasing the deployment assembly from the tubular string; raising the deployment assembly from the tubular string to accommodate heave; and anchoring the workstring to the offshore drilling unit. The method further includes, during thickening of the cement slurry and while a seal is engaged with an outer surface of the workstring: using a heave sensor to monitor the heave, injecting liquid or mud into a return line in fluid communication with the annulus during a swab stroke of the heave, the liquid or mud being injected upstream of a fast acting choke valve, and operating the fast acting choke valve to dampen a pulse exerted on the cement slurry by the heave.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

So that the manner in which the above recited features of the present disclosure can be understood in detail, a more particular description of the disclosure, briefly summarized above, may be had by reference to embodiments, some of which are illustrated in the appended drawings. It is to be noted, however, that the appended drawings illustrate only typical embodiments of this disclosure and are therefore not to be considered limiting of its scope, for the disclosure may admit to other equally effective embodiments.

FIGS. **1**A-**1**C illustrate a drilling system in a cement injection mode, according to one embodiment of this disclosure.

FIGS. **2**A-**2**C illustrate injection of cement slurry into a casing annulus using the drilling system.

FIGS. **3**A-**3**C illustrate operation of the drilling system in a cement pulsation mode during curing of the cement slurry.

FIG. **4** illustrates completion of the cementing operation.

FIG. **5** illustrates operation of a first alternative drilling system in a cement pulsation mode during curing of the cement slurry, according to another embodiment of this disclosure.

FIGS. **6**A-**6**C illustrate operation of a second alternative drilling system in a cement pulsation mode during curing of the cement slurry, according to another embodiment of this disclosure.

FIGS. **7**A-**7**C illustrate operation of a third alternative drilling system in a cement pulsation mode during curing of the cement slurry, according to another embodiment of this disclosure.

FIGS. **8**A-**8**G illustrate operation of a fourth alternative drilling system in a cement pulsation mode during curing of the cement slurry, according to another embodiment of this disclosure.

FIG. **9** illustrates cement pulsation during curing of a temporary abandonment cement plug, according to another embodiment of this disclosure.

FIG. **10** illustrates cement pulsation of curing cement slurry in an annulus of a liner string, according to another embodiment of this disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

FIGS. **1**A-**1**C illustrate a drilling system **1** in a cement injection mode, according to one embodiment of this disclosure. The drilling system **1** may include a mobile offshore drilling unit (MODU) **1***m*, such as a semi-submersible, a drilling rig **1***r*, a fluid handling system **1***h*, a fluid transport system **1***t*, a pressure control assembly (PCA) **1***p*, and a workstring **9**.

The MODU **1***m* may carry the drilling rig **1***r* and the fluid handling system **1***h* aboard and may include a moon pool, through which drilling operations are conducted. The semi-submersible MODU **1***m* may include a lower barge hull which floats below a surface (aka waterline) **2***s* of sea **2** and is, therefore, less subject to surface wave action. Stability columns (only one shown) may be mounted on the lower barge hull for supporting an upper hull above the waterline **2***s*. The upper hull may have one or more decks for carrying the drilling rig **1***r* and fluid handling system **1***h*. The MODU **1***m* may further have a dynamic positioning system (DPS) (not shown) or be moored for maintaining the moon pool in position over a subsea wellhead **10**.

Alternatively, the MODU may be a drill ship. Alternatively, a fixed offshore drilling unit or a non-mobile floating offshore drilling unit may be used instead of the MODU. Alternatively, the wellbore may be subsea having a wellhead located adjacent to the waterline and the drilling rig may be a located on a platform adjacent the wellhead. Alternatively, the wellbore may be subterranean and the drilling rig located on a terrestrial pad.

The drilling rig **1***r* may include a derrick **3**, a floor **4***f*, a rotary table **4***t*, a spider **4***s*, a top drive **5**, a cementing head **7**, and a hoist. The top drive **5** may include a motor for rotating **54** (FIG. **2**A) the workstring **9**. The top drive motor may be electric or hydraulic. A frame of the top drive **5** may be linked to a rail (not shown) of the derrick **3** for preventing rotation thereof during rotation of the workstring **9** and allowing for vertical movement of the top drive with a traveling block **11***t* of the hoist. The top drive frame may be suspended from the traveling block **11***t* by a drill string compensator **8**. The quill may be torsionally driven by the top drive motor and supported from the frame by bearings. The top drive **5** may further have an inlet connected to the frame and in fluid communication with the quill. The traveling block **11***t* may be supported by wire rope **11***r* connected at its upper end to a crown block **11***c*. The wire rope **11***r* may be woven through sheaves of the blocks **11***c,t* and extend to drawworks **12** for reeling thereof, thereby raising or lowering the traveling block **11***t* relative to the derrick **3**.

The drill string compensator may **8** may alleviate the effects of heave on the workstring **9** when suspended from the top drive **5**. The drill string compensator **8** may be active, passive, or a combination system including both an active and passive compensator. Alternatively, drill string compensator **8** may be disposed between the crown block **11***c* and the derrick **3**.

Alternatively, a Kelly and rotary table may be used instead of the top drive.

In the deployment mode, an upper end of the workstring **9** may be connected to the top drive quill, such as by threaded couplings. The workstring **9** may include a casing deployment assembly (CDA) **9***d* and a deployment string, such as such as joints of drill pipe **9***p* connected together, such as by threaded couplings. An upper end of the CDA **9***d* may be connected a lower end of the drill pipe **9***p*, such as by threaded couplings. The CDA **9***d* may be connected to the inner casing string **15**, such as by engagement of a bayonet lug with a mating bayonet profile formed in an upper end of the inner casing string **15**. The inner casing string **15** may include a packer **15***p*, a casing hanger **15***h*, a mandrel **15***m* for carrying the hanger and packer and having a seal bore formed therein, joints of casing **15***j*, a float collar **15***c*, and a guide shoe **15***s*. The inner casing components may be interconnected, such as by threaded couplings.

Once deployment of the inner casing string **15** has concluded, the workstring **9** may be disconnected from the top drive **5** and the cementing head **7** may be inserted and connected between the top drive **5** and the workstring **9**. The cementing head **7** may include an isolation valve **6**, an actuator swivel **7***h*, a cementing swivel **7***c*, one or more release plug launchers, such as a first dart launcher **7***a* and a second dart launcher **7***b*, and a control console **7***e*. The isolation valve **6** may be connected to a quill of the top drive **5** and an upper end of the actuator swivel **7***h*, such as by threaded couplings. An upper end of the workstring **9** may be connected to a lower end of the cementing head **7**, such as by threaded couplings.

The cementing swivel **7***c* may include a housing torsionally connected to the derrick **3**, such as by bars, wire rope, or a bracket (not shown). The torsional connection may accommodate longitudinal movement of the swivel **7***c* relative to the derrick **3**. The cementing swivel **7***c* may further include a mandrel and bearings for supporting the housing from the mandrel while accommodating rotation of the mandrel. An upper end of the mandrel may be connected to a lower end of the actuator swivel, such as by threaded couplings. The cementing swivel **7***c* may further include an inlet formed through a wall of the housing and in fluid communication with a port formed through the mandrel and a seal assembly for isolating the inlet-port communication. The cementing mandrel port may provide fluid communication between a bore of the cementing head and the housing inlet. The actuator swivel **7***h* may be similar to the cementing swivel **7***c* except that the housing may have three inlets in fluid communication with respective passages formed through the mandrel. The mandrel passages may extend to respective outlets of the mandrel for connection to respective hydraulic conduits (only one shown) for operating respective hydraulic actuators of the dart launchers **7***a,b*. The actuator swivel inlets may be in fluid communication with a hydraulic power unit (HPU, not shown) operated by the control console **7***e*.

Each dart launcher **7***a,b* may include a body, a diverter, a canister, a latch, and the actuator. Each body may be tubular and may have a bore therethrough. To facilitate assembly, each body may include two or more sections connected together, such as by threaded couplings. An upper end of the top dart launcher body may be connected to a lower end of the actuator swivel **7***h*, such as by threaded couplings and a lower end of the bottom dart launcher body may be connected to the workstring **9**. Each body may further have a landing shoulder formed in an inner surface thereof. Each canister and diverter may each be disposed in the respective body bore. Each diverter may be connected to the respective body, such as by threaded couplings. Each canister may be longitudinally movable relative to the respective body. Each canister may be tubular and have ribs formed along and around an outer surface thereof. Bypass passages may be formed between the ribs. Each canister may further have a landing shoulder formed in a lower end thereof corresponding to the respective body landing shoulder. Each diverter may be operable to deflect fluid received from a cement line **14** away from a bore of the respective canister and toward the bypass passages. A release plug, such as a top dart **43***u* or a bottom dart **43***b*, may be disposed in the respective canister bore.

Each latch may include a body, a plunger, and a shaft. Each latch body may be connected to a respective lug formed in an outer surface of the respective launcher body, such as by threaded couplings. Each plunger may be longitudinally movable relative to the respective latch body and radially movable relative to the respective launcher body between a capture position and a release position. Each plunger may be moved between the positions by interaction, such as a jackscrew, with the respective shaft. Each shaft may be longitudinally connected to and rotatable relative to the respective latch body. Each actuator may be a hydraulic motor operable to rotate the shaft relative to the latch body.

Alternatively, the actuator swivel and launcher actuators may be pneumatic or electric. Alternatively, the dart launcher actuators may be linear, such as piston and cylinders.

In operation, when it is desired to launch one of the darts **43***u,b*, the console **7***e* may be operated to supply hydraulic fluid to the appropriate launcher actuator via the actuator swivel **7***h*. The selected launcher actuator may then move the plunger to the release position (not shown). The respective canister and dart **43***u,b* may then move downward relative to the body until the landing shoulders engage. Engagement of the landing shoulders may close the respective canister bypass passages, thereby forcing fluid to flow into the canister bore. The fluid may then propel the respective dart **43***u,b* from the canister bore into a lower bore of the body and onward through the workstring **9**.

The fluid transport system it may include an upper marine riser package (UMRP) **16***u*, a marine riser **17**, a booster line **18***b*, and a choke line **18***k*. The riser **17** may extend from the PCA **1***p* to the MODU **1***m* and may connect to the MODU via the UMRP **16***u*. The UMRP **16***u* may include a diverter **19**, a flex joint **20**, a slip (aka telescopic) joint **21**, and a tensioner **22**. The slip joint **21** may include an outer barrel connected to an upper end of the riser **17**, such as by a flanged connection, and an inner barrel connected to the flex joint **20**, such as by a flanged connection. The outer barrel may also be connected to the tensioner **22**, such as by a tensioner ring.

The flex joint **20** may also connect to the diverter **19**, such as by a flanged connection. The diverter **19** may also be connected to the rig floor **4***f*, such as by a bracket. The slip joint **21** may be operable to extend and retract in response to heave **60** (FIG. **3**A) of the MODU **1***m* relative to the riser **17** while the tensioner **22** may reel wire rope in response to the heave, thereby supporting the riser **17** from the MODU **1***m* while accommodating the heave. The riser **17** may have one or more buoyancy modules (not shown) disposed therealong to reduce load on the tensioner **22**.

The diverter **19** may include an outer housing **19***h* (FIG. **3**A), a latch, an actuator, and an inner packer **19***p*. The housing **19***h* may include a plurality of sections connected together and the actuator may be disposed between adjacent sections of the housing and in fluid communication with a actuator hydraulic port formed through a wall of the housing. The actuator may include a resilient ring inwardly displaceable by injection of hydraulic fluid to the actuator port. The packer **19***p* may be releasably connected to the housing by engagement with the latch. The latch may be connected to the housing **19***h* and in fluid communication with a hydraulic latch port formed through the housing wall. The latch may be engaged and disengaged by the application and removal of hydraulic fluid to the latch port. The resilient ring may be engagable with an outer surface of a packing element of the packer **19***p* and may drive the packing element inward into engagement with the drill pipe **9***p*.

The PCA **1***p* may be connected to the wellhead **10** located adjacent to a floor **2***f* of the sea **2**. A conductor string **23** may be driven into the seafloor **2***f*. The conductor string **23** may include a housing and joints of conductor pipe connected together, such as by threaded couplings. Once the conductor string **23** has been set, a subsea wellbore **24** may be drilled into the seafloor **2***f* and an outer casing string **25** may be deployed into the wellbore. The outer casing string **25** may include a wellhead housing and joints of casing connected together, such as by threaded couplings. The wellhead housing may land in the conductor housing during deployment of the casing string **25**. The outer casing string **25** may be cemented **26** into the wellbore **24**. The casing string **25** may extend to a depth adjacent a bottom of the upper formation **27***u*. The wellbore **24** may then be extended into the lower formation **27***b* using a drill string (not shown).

The upper formation **27***u* may be non-productive and a lower formation **27***b* may be a hydrocarbon-bearing reservoir. Alternatively, the lower formation **27***b* may be non-productive (e.g., a depleted zone), environmentally sensitive, such as an aquifer, or unstable.

The PCA **1***p* may include a wellhead adapter **28***b*, one or more flow crosses **29***u,m,b*, one or more blow out preventers (BOPs) **30***a,u,b*, a lower marine riser package (LMRP) **16***b*, one or more accumulators, and a receiver **31**. The LMRP **16***b* may include a control pod, a flex joint **32**, and a connector **28***u*. The wellhead adapter **28***b*, flow crosses **29***u,m,b*, BOPs **30***a,u,b*, receiver **31**, connector **28***u*, and flex joint **32**, may each include a housing having a longitudinal bore therethrough and may each be connected, such as by flanges, such that a continuous bore is maintained therethrough. The flex joints **21**, **32** may accommodate respective horizontal and/or rotational (aka pitch and roll) movement of the MODU **1***m* relative to the riser **17** and the riser relative to the PCA **1***p*.

Each of the connector **28***u* and wellhead adapter **28***b* may include one or more fasteners, such as dogs, for fastening the LMRP **16***b* to the BOPs **30***a,u,b* and the PCA **1***p* to an external profile of the wellhead housing, respectively. Each of the connector **28**_u_ and wellhead adapter **28**_b_ may further include a seal sleeve for engaging an internal profile of the respective receiver **31** and wellhead housing. Each of the connector **28**_u_ and wellhead adapter **28**_b_ may be in electric or hydraulic communication with the control pod and/or further include an electric or hydraulic actuator and an interface, such as a hot stab, so that a remotely operated subsea vehicle (ROV) (not shown) may operate the actuator for engaging the dogs with the external profile.

The LMRP **16**_b_ may receive a lower end of the riser **17** and connect the riser to the PCA **1**_p_. The control pod may be in electric, hydraulic, and/or optical communication with a control console **33**_c_ onboard the MODU **1**_m_ via an umbilical **33**_u_. The control pod may include one or more control valves (not shown) in communication with the BOPs **30**_a,u,b_ for operation thereof. Each control valve may include an electric or hydraulic actuator in communication with the umbilical **33**_u_. The umbilical **33**_u_ may include one or more hydraulic and/or electric control conduit/cables for the actuators. The accumulators may store pressurized hydraulic fluid for operating the BOPs **30**_a,u,b_. Additionally, the accumulators may be used for operating one or more of the other components of the PCA **1**_p_. The control pod may further include control valves for operating the other functions of the PCA **1**_p_. The control console **33**_c_ may operate the PCA **1**_p_ via the umbilical **33**_u_ and the control pod.

A lower end of the booster line **18**_b_ may be connected to a branch of the flow cross **29**_u_ by a shutoff valve. A booster manifold may also connect to the booster line lower end and have a prong connected to a respective branch of each flow cross **29**_m,b_. Shutoff valves may be disposed in respective prongs of the booster manifold. Alternatively, a separate kill line (not shown) may be connected to the branches of the flow crosses **29**_m,b_ instead of the booster manifold. An upper end of the booster line **18**_b_ may be connected to an outlet of a booster pump **44**. A lower end of the choke line **18**_k_ may have prongs connected to respective second branches of the flow crosses **29**_m,b_. Shutoff valves may be disposed in respective prongs of the choke line lower end. An upper end of the choke line **18**_k_ may be connected to an inlet of a mud gas separator (MGS) **46**.

A pressure sensor may be connected to a second branch of the upper flow cross **29**_u_. Pressure sensors may also be connected to the choke line prongs between respective shutoff valves and respective flow cross second branches. Each pressure sensor may be in data communication with the control pod. The lines **18**_b,c_ and umbilical **33**_u_ may extend between the MODU **1**_m_ and the PCA **1**_p_ by being fastened to brackets disposed along the riser **17**. Each shutoff valve may be automated and have a hydraulic actuator (not shown) operable by the control pod.

Alternatively, the umbilical may be extended between the MODU and the PCA independently of the riser. Alternatively, the shutoff valve actuators may be electrical or pneumatic.

The fluid handling system **1**_h_ may include one or more pumps, such as a cement pump **13**, a mud pump **34**, and the booster pump **44**, a reservoir, such as a tank **35**, a solids separator, such as a shale shaker **36**, one or more pressure gauges **37**_c,k,m,r_, one or more stroke counters **38**_c,m_, one or more flow lines, such as cement line **14**, mud line **39**, and return line **40**, one or more shutoff valves **41**_k,r_, a cement mixer **42**, a well control (WC) choke **45**, the MGS **46**, and a relief valve **49**. In the drilling mode, the tank **35** may be filled with drilling fluid, such as mud (not shown). In the casing deployment mode, the tank **35** may be filled with conditioner **55** (FIG. 2A). In the cement injection mode, the tank **35** may be filled with chaser fluid **47**. A booster supply line may be connected to an outlet of the mud tank **35** and an inlet of the booster pump **44**. The choke shutoff valve **41**_k_, the choke pressure gauge **37**_k_, and the WC choke **45** may be assembled as part of the upper portion of the choke line **18**_k_.

A first end of the return line **40** may be connected to the diverter outlet and a second end of the return line may be connected to an inlet of the shaker **36**. The returns pressure gauge **37**_r_, a return shutoff valve **41**_r_, and the relief valve **49** may be assembled as part of the return line **40**. The relief valve **49** may be pressure operated and have an inlet in fluid communication with a portion of the return line **40** upstream of the return shutoff valve **41**_r_ and an outlet in fluid communication with a portion of the return line downstream of the shutoff valve **41**_r_. A lower end of the mud line **39** may be connected to an outlet of the mud pump **34** and an upper end of the mud line may be connected to the top drive inlet. The mud pressure gauge **37**_m_ may be assembled as part of the mud line **39**. An upper end of the cement line **14** may be connected to the cementing swivel inlet and a lower end of the cement line may be connected to an outlet of the cement pump **13**. The cement shutoff valve **41**_c_ and the cement pressure gauge **37**_c_ may be assembled as part of the cement line **14**. A lower end of a mud supply line may be connected to an outlet of the mud tank **35** and an upper end of the mud supply line may be connected to an inlet of the mud pump **34**. An upper end of a cement supply line may be connected to an outlet of the cement mixer **42** and a lower end of the cement supply line may be connected to an inlet of the cement pump **13**.

The CDA **9**_d_ may include a running tool **50**, a plug release system **52**, **53**_u,b_, and a packoff **51**. The packoff **51** may be disposed in a recess of a housing of the running tool **50** and carry inner and outer seals for isolating an interface between the inner casing string **15** and the CDA **9**_d_ by engagement with the seal bore of the mandrel **15**_m_. The running tool housing may be connected to a housing of the plug release system **52**, **53**_u,b_, such as by threaded couplings.

The plug release system **52**, **53**_u,b_ may include an equalization valve **52**, a top wiper plug **53**_u_ and a bottom wiper plug **53**_b_. The equalization valve **52** may include a housing, an outer wall, a cap, a piston, a spring, a collet, and a seal insert. The housing, outer wall, and cap may be interconnected, such as by threaded couplings. The piston and spring may be disposed in an annular chamber formed radially between the housing and the outer wall and longitudinally between a shoulder of the housing and a shoulder of the cap. The piston may divide the chamber into an upper portion and a lower portion and carry a seal for isolating the portions. The cap and housing may also carry seals for isolating the portions. The spring may bias the piston toward the cap. The cap may have a port formed therethrough for providing fluid communication between an annulus **48** formed between the inner casing string **15** and the wellbore **24**/outer casing string **25** and the chamber lower portion and the housing may have a port formed through a wall thereof for venting the upper chamber portion. An outlet port may be formed by a gap between a bottom of the housing and a top of the cap. As pressure from the annulus **48** acts against a lower surface of the piston through the cap passage, the piston may move upward and open the outlet port to facilitate equalization of pressure between the annulus and a bore of the housing to prevent surge pressure from prematurely releasing one or more of the wiper plugs **53**_u,b_.

Each wiper plug **53**_u,b_ may be made from a drillable material and include a respective finned seal, a plug body, a latch sleeve, and a lock sleeve. Each latch sleeve may have a collet formed in an upper end thereof and the top latch sleeve may have a respective collet profile formed in a lower portion thereof. Each lock sleeve may have a respective seat and seal bore formed therein. Each lock sleeve may be movable between an upper position and a lower position and be releasably restrained in the upper position by a respective shearable fastener. Each dart **43***u,b* may be made from a drillable material and include a respective finned seal and dart body. Each dart body may have a respective landing shoulder and carry a respective landing seal for engagement with the respective seat and seal bore. A major diameter of the bottom landing shoulder may be less than a minor diameter of the top seat such that the bottom dart **43***b* may pass through the top wiper plug **53***u*.

The top shearable fastener may releasably connect the top lock sleeve to the valve housing and the top lock sleeve may be engaged with the valve collet in the upper position, thereby locking the valve collet into engagement with the collet of the top latch sleeve. The bottom shearable fastener may releasably connect the bottom lock sleeve to the top latch sleeve and the bottom lock sleeve may be engaged with the collet of the bottom latch sleeve, thereby locking the collet into engagement with the collet profile of the bottom latch sleeve. The bottom wiper plug **53***b* may include one or more bypass ports formed through a wall of the bottom lock sleeve initially sealed by a burst tube to prevent fluid flow therethrough. The burst tube may be adapted to rupture when a pressure is applied thereto and a rupture pressure of the burst tube may be substantially greater than a release pressure necessary to fracture the bottom shearable fastener of the bottom wiper plug **50***b*.

To facilitate subsequent drill-out, each plug body may further have a portion of an auto-orienting torsional profile formed at a longitudinal end thereof. The top plug body may have the female portion and male portion formed at respective upper and lower ends thereof (or vice versa). The bottom plug body may have only the male portion formed at the lower end thereof.

The float collar **15***c* may include a housing, a check valve, and a body. The body and check valve may be made from drillable materials. The body may have a bore formed therethrough and the torsional profile female portion formed in an upper end thereof for receiving the bottom wiper plug **53***b*. The check valve may include a seat, a poppet disposed within the seat, a seal disposed around the poppet and adapted to contact an inner surface of the seat to close the body bore, and a rib. The poppet may have a head portion and a stem portion. The rib may support a stem portion of the poppet. A spring may be disposed around the stem portion and may bias the poppet against the seat to facilitate sealing. During deployment of the inner casing string **15**, the conditioner **55** may be circulated to prepare the annulus **48** for cementing. The conditioner **55** may be pumped down at a sufficient pressure to overcome the bias of the spring, actuating the poppet downward to allow conditioner to flow through the bore of the body.

The guide shoe **15***s* may include a housing and a nose made from a drillable material. The nose may have a rounded distal end to guide the inner casing **15** down into the wellbore **24**.

During deployment of the inner casing string **15**, the workstring **9** may be lowered by the traveling block **11***t* and the conditioner **55** may be pumped into the workstring bore by the mud pump **34** via the mud line **39** and top drive **5**. The conditioner **55** may flow down the workstring bore and the liner string bore and be discharged by the guide shoe **15***s* into the annulus **48**. The conditioner **55** may flow up the annulus **48** and exit the wellbore **24** and flow into an annulus formed between the riser **17** and the workstring **9** via an annulus of the LMRP **16***b*, BOP stack, and wellhead **10**. The conditioner **55** may exit the riser annulus and enter the return line **40** via an annulus of the UMRP **16***u* and the diverter **19**. The conditioner **55** may flow through the return line **40** and into the shale shaker inlet. The conditioner **55** may be processed by the shale shaker **36** to remove any particulates therefrom.

The workstring **9** may be lowered until the inner casing hanger **15***h* seats against a mating shoulder of the subsea wellhead **10**. The workstring **9** may continued to be lowered, thereby releasing a shearable connection of the casing hanger **15***h* and driving a cone thereof into dogs thereof, thereby extending the dogs into engagement with a profile of the wellhead **10** and setting the hanger.

FIGS. **2A-2C** illustrate injection of cement slurry **56** into the annulus **48** using the drilling system **1**. Once the inner casing hanger **15***h* has been set, the inner casing string may be rotated **54** by operation of the top drive **5** (via the workstring **9**) and rotation may continue during injection of the cement slurry **56**. The bottom dart **43***b* may be released from the first launcher **7***a* by operating the first plug launcher actuator. Cement slurry **56** may be pumped from the mixer **42** into the cementing swivel **7***c* via the valve **41***c* by the cement pump **13**. The cement slurry **56** may flow into the second launcher **7***b* and be diverted past the top dart **43***u* via the diverter and bypass passages. The cement slurry **56** may flow into the first launcher **7***a* and be forced behind the bottom dart **43***b* by closing of the bypass passages, thereby propelling the bottom dart into the workstring bore.

Once the desired quantity of cement slurry **56** has been pumped, the top dart **43***u* may be released from the second launcher **7***b* by operating the second plug launcher actuator. The chaser fluid **47** may be pumped into the cementing swivel **7***c* via the valve **41** by the cement pump **13**. The chaser fluid **47** may flow into the second launcher **7***b* and be forced behind the bottom dart **43***b* by closing of the bypass passages, thereby propelling the second dart into the workstring bore. Pumping of the chaser fluid **47** by the cement pump **13** may continue until residual cement in the cement line **14** has been purged. Pumping of the chaser fluid **47** may then be transferred to the mud pump **34** by closing the valve **41***c* and opening the valve **6**. The train of darts **43***u,b* and cement slurry **56** may be driven through the workstring bore by the chaser fluid **47**. The bottom dart **43***b* may reach the bottom wiper plug **53***b* and the landing shoulder and seal of the bottom dart may engage the seat and seal bore of the bottom wiper plug.

Continued pumping of the chaser fluid **47** may increase pressure in the workstring bore against the seated bottom dart **43***b* until the release pressure is achieved, thereby fracturing the bottom shearable fastener. The bottom dart **43***b* and lock sleeve of the bottom wiper plug **53***b* may travel downward until reaching a stop of the bottom wiper plug, thereby freeing the collet of the bottom latch sleeve and releasing the bottom wiper plug from the top wiper plug **53***u*. The released bottom dart **43***b* and bottom wiper plug **53***b* may travel down the bore of the inner casing string **15** wiping the inner surface thereof and forcing the conditioner **55** therethrough. The top dart **43***u* may then reach the top wiper plug **53***u* and the landing shoulder and seal of the top dart may engage the seat and seal bore of the top wiper plug.

Continued pumping of the chaser fluid **47** may increase pressure in the workstring bore against the seated top dart **43***u* until the release pressure is achieved, thereby fracturing the top shearable fastener. The top dart **43***u* and lock sleeve of the top wiper plug **53***u* may travel downward until reaching a stop of the top wiper plug, thereby freeing the collet of the top latch sleeve and releasing the top wiper plug from the equalization valve **52**. Continued pumping of the chaser fluid **47** may drive the train of darts **43***u,b*, wiper plugs **53***u,b*, and cement slurry **56** through the inner casing bore until the bottom wiper plug **53***b* bumps the float collar **15***c*.

Continued pumping of the chaser fluid **47** may increase pressure in the inner casing bore against the seated bottom dart **43***b* and bottom wiper plug **53***b* until the rupture pressure is achieved, thereby rupturing the burst tube and opening the bypass ports of the bottom wiper plug. The cement slurry **56** may flow around the bottom dart **43***b* and through the bottom wiper plug **53***b* and the guide shoe **15***s*, and upward into the annulus **48**.

Pumping of the chaser fluid **47** may continue to drive the cement slurry **56** into the annulus **48** until the top wiper plug **53***u* bumps the seated bottom wiper plug **53***b*. Pumping of the chaser fluid **47** may then be halted and rotation **54** of the inner casing string **15** may also be halted. The float collar check valve may close in response to halting of the pumping.

FIGS. **3**A-**3**C illustrate operation of the drilling system **1** in a cement pulsation mode during curing of the cement slurry **56**. The bayonet connection between the CDA **9***d* and the inner casing string **15** may be released. The cementing head **7** (minus the isolation valve **6**) may be removed and the workstring **9** connected to the isolation valve **6** and raised to create sufficient clearance between the equalization valve **52** and the casing hanger **15***h* to accommodate heave **60** of the workstring **9**. The spider **4***s* may then be operated to engage the drill pipe **9***p*, thereby longitudinally supporting the workstring **9** from the rig floor **4***f*. However, once the workstring **9** is supported from the rig floor **4***f*, the drill string compensator **8** can no longer alleviate heaving of the workstring with the MODU **1***m* (depicted by phantom).

A trip tank **57** filled with conditioner **55** may connected to the diverter **19** via spool **58**. The spool **58** may have a check valve **59** assembled as part thereof. The check valve **59** may be oriented to allow fluid flow from the trip tank **57** to the diverter **19** and prevent reverse flow from the diverter to the trip tank. The packing element of the diverter **19** may be expanded into engagement with the drill pipe **9***p* by supplying hydraulic fluid to the actuator port thereof. The isolation valve **6** and the return shutoff valve **41***r* may be closed, thereby creating a heave chamber **61**. The heave chamber **61** may be closed to contain positive pressure (below a set pressure of the relief valve **49**) at an upper portion via the check valve **59**, the closed diverter packer **19***p*, the closed return valve **41***r*, and the closed isolation valve **6** and at a lower portion via the top dart **43***u* and top wiper plug **53***u*. The heave chamber **61** may be in fluid communication with the annulus **48** due to the casing packer **15***p* being in the unset position. The conditioner **55** and chaser fluid **47** may each be a liquid or mud. The heave chamber **61** may be purged of any gas present therein such that the heave chamber **61** and annulus **48** are filled with the relatively incompressible conditioner **55**, chaser fluid **47**, and cement slurry **56**.

Alternatively, the workstring or top drive may have a check valve for automatically closing the bore of the workstring instead of the isolation valve.

The workstring **9** and MODU **1***m* may then heave **60** relative to the stationary riser string **17** (due to the slip joint **21**), PCA **1***p*, subsea wellhead **10**, and inner casing string **15**. Heaving **60** of the workstring **9** may include an upward stroke and a downward stroke. Displacement of fluid volume by the drill pipe **9***p* may cause a corresponding surge in pressure of the heave chamber **61** during the downward stroke and a corresponding swab of pressure of the heave chamber during the upward stroke. Addition of the conditioner **55** from the trip tank **57** may negate the swab from the upward stroke of the heave **60**, thereby leaving positive pressure pulses **62** from the repeated downward strokes. The pulses **62** may disrupt gelling of the cement slurry **56** and pulsing may continue until the entire column of the cement slurry **56** has thickened sufficiently to prevent gas migration. The thickening time may be predetermined and may range between two and twelve hours, such as four to six hours. The thickening time may be determined empirically by laboratory testing and/or theoretically by computer modeling or provided by the vendor of the cement pre-mixture.

The relief valve **49** may be set at a pressure corresponding to, such as equal to or slightly less than, a maximum allowable pressure of the lower formation **27***b*, such as a fracture pressure thereof, minus the bottomhole pressure generated by the hydrostatic head of the cement slurry **56** plus the hydrostatic head of the conditioner **55** to ensure that the heave pulses **62** do not overpressure the lower formation **27***b*. A magnitude of the pulses **62** may be low compared to the bottomhole pressure, such as less than or equal to one-fifth, one-tenth, or one-twentieth of the bottomhole pressure. In absolute terms, a magnitude of the heave pulses **62** may range from fifty to five hundred psi, such as between eighty and two hundred psi.

FIG. **4** illustrates completion of the cementing operation. Once the cement slurry **56** has cured to the thickened state, the spider **4***s* may be operated to release the workstring **9** and the workstring lowered to reengage the CDA **9***d* with the casing hanger **15***h*. The bayonet connection may be reconnected and continued lowering of the workstring **9** may drive a wedge of the casing packer **15***p* into a metallic seal ring thereof, thereby extending the seal ring into engagement with a seal bore of the wellhead **10** and setting the packer. The bayonet connection may be released and the workstring **9** may be retrieved to the rig **1***r*.

FIG. **5** illustrates operation of a first alternative drilling system in a cement pulsation mode during curing of the cement slurry **56**, according to another embodiment of this disclosure. The first alternative drilling system may be similar to the drilling system **1** except for modification of the diverter **19** by removing the packer **19***p* from the diverter housing **19***h* and adding a rotating control device (RCD) converter **63** thereto so that the CDA **9***d* may remain engaged to the casing packer **15***p* and the drill string compensator **8** may remain operational during pulsation by the workstring **9** being suspended from the top drive **5**. The heave pulses **62** may instead be generated by the heaving **60** of the modified diverter **19***h*, **63**, flex joint **20**, and the inner barrel of the slip joint **21** relative to the stationary drill pipe **9***p*.

The RCD converter **63** may include a housing having an upper section and lower section. The upper housing section may include a circumferential flange, which may be positioned on the diverter housing. The lower housing section may include a cylindrical insert and an upset ring. The upper housing section may be connected with the lower housing section, such as by threaded couplings. One or more anti-rotation pins may be placed through aligned openings in the threaded connection between the upper and lower housing sections. The upset ring may be connected to the cylindrical insert, such as by threaded couplings. A seal sleeve may be disposed along and around an outer surface of the cylindrical insert and may be disposed between a conical upper portion of the insert and the upset ring. Expansion of the diverter actuator ring against the seal sleeve may both fasten the RCD converter **63** to the diverter housing **19***h* and seal the interface therebetween.

The RCD converter **63** may further include a bearing assembly fastened to the upper housing section, such as by a clamp. The bearing assembly may include an outer sleeve, a dynamic seal, such as a stripper, and a bearing pack. The stripper may include a retainer and a seal. The stripper seal may be directional and oriented to seal against drill pipe **9***p* in response to higher pressure in the UMRP **16***u* than the environment. The stripper seal may have a conical shape for fluid pressure to act against a respective tapered surface thereof, thereby generating sealing pressure against the drill pipe **9***p*. The stripper seal may have an inner diameter slightly less than a pipe diameter of the drill pipe **9***p* to form an interference fit therebetween.

The stripper seal may be flexible enough to accommodate and seal against threaded couplings of the drill pipe **9***p* having a larger tool joint diameter. The drill pipe **9***p* may be received through a bore of the bearing assembly so that the stripper seal may engage the drill pipe **9***p*. The stripper seal may be better suited to withstand the heave of the diverter **19** relative to the drill pipe **9***p* as compared to the packing element of the diverter packer **19***p*. The bearing pack may support the stripper from the outer sleeve such that the strippers may rotate relative to the converter housing. The bearing pack may include one or more radial bearings, one or more thrust bearings, and a self contained lubricant system. The bearing pack may be disposed above the stripper and be housed in and connected to the outer sleeve, such as by threaded couplings and/or fasteners.

Alternatively, for either or both of the drilling system **1** or the first alternative drilling system, immediately after the top wiper plug **53***u* bumps the bottom wiper plug **53***b* and the heave chamber **61** has been created, a shutoff valve of the booster manifold and a shutoff valve of one of the choke prongs may be opened. The booster pump **44** may be operated to pump conditioner **55** down the booster line **18***b* and into the PCA **1***p*. The conditioner **55** may flow from the PCA **1***p* and up the choke line **18***k* and through the WC choke **45**. The WC choke **45** may be set to exert a predetermined back pressure on the cement slurry **56** in the annulus **48**. Once the back pressure has been achieved, the booster pump **44** may be shut down while closing the shutoff valve of the booster manifold and the shutoff valve of the choke prong, thereby sealing the annulus **48** with the exerted back pressure. The back pressure may protect against U-tubing of the cement slurry **56** and/or dislodgement of the wiper plugs **53***u,b* during heave pulsing of the cement slurry.

FIGS. **6**A-**6**C illustrate operation of a second alternative drilling system **65** in a cement pulsation mode during curing of the cement slurry **56**, according to another embodiment of this disclosure. The drilling system **65** may include the MODU **1***m*, the drilling rig **1***r*, a fluid handling system **65***h*, a fluid transport system **65***t*, the PCA **1***p*, and the workstring **9**.

The fluid transport system **65***t* may include an UMRP **64**, the marine riser **17**, the booster line **18***b*, and the choke line **18***k*. The UMRP **64** may include the diverter **19**, the flex joint **20**, the slip joint **21**, the tensioner **22**, and an RCD **66**. A lower end of the RCD **66** may be connected to an upper end of the riser **17**, such as by a flanged connection. The slip joint outer barrel may be connected to an upper end of the RCD **66**, such as by a flanged connection.

The RCD **66** may include a docking station and a bearing assembly. The docking station may be submerged adjacent the waterline **2***s*. The docking station may include a housing, a latch, and an interface. The RCD housing may be tubular and have one or more sections connected together, such as by flanged connections. The RCD housing may have one or more fluid ports formed through a lower housing section and the docking station may include a connection, such as a flanged outlet, fastened to one of the ports.

The latch may include a hydraulic actuator, such as a piston, one or more fasteners, such as dogs, and a body. The latch body may be connected to the housing, such as by threaded couplings. A piston chamber may be formed between the latch body and a mid housing section. The latch body may have openings formed through a wall thereof for receiving the respective dogs. The latch piston may be disposed in the chamber and may carry seals isolating an upper portion of the chamber from a lower portion of the chamber. A cam surface may be formed on an inner surface of the piston for radially displacing the dogs. The latch body may further have a landing shoulder formed in an inner surface thereof for receiving a protective sleeve (not shown) or the bearing assembly.

Hydraulic passages may be formed through the mid housing section and may provide fluid communication between the interface and respective portions of the hydraulic chamber for selective operation of the piston. An RCD umbilical may have hydraulic conduits and may provide fluid communication between the RCD interface and a HPU (not shown). The RCD umbilical may further have an electric cable for providing data communication between a control console (not shown) and the RCD interface via a controller.

The bearing assembly may include a catch sleeve, one or more dynamic seals, such as strippers, and a bearing pack. Each stripper may include a gland or retainer and a seal. Each stripper seal may be directional and oriented to seal against drill pipe **9***p* in response to higher pressure in the riser **17** than the UMRP **64**. Each stripper seal may have a conical shape for fluid pressure to act against a respective tapered surface thereof, thereby generating sealing pressure against the drill pipe **9***p*. Each stripper seal may have an inner diameter slightly less than a pipe diameter of the drill pipe **9***p* to form an interference fit therebetween. Each stripper seal may be flexible enough to accommodate and seal against threaded couplings of the drill pipe **9***p* having a larger tool joint diameter. The drill pipe **9***p* may be received through a bore of the bearing assembly so that the stripper seals may engage the drill pipe **9***p*. The stripper seals may provide a desired barrier in the riser **17** either when the drill pipe **9***p* is stationary, rotating, or heaving.

The catch sleeve may have a landing shoulder formed at an outer surface thereof, a catch profile formed in an outer surface thereof, and may carry one or more seals on an outer surface thereof. Engagement of the latch dogs with the catch sleeve may connect the bearing assembly to the docking station. The gland may have a landing shoulder formed in an inner surface thereof and a catch profile formed in an inner surface thereof for retrieval by a bearing assembly running tool. The bearing pack may support the strippers from the catch sleeve such that the strippers may rotate relative to the docking station. The bearing pack may include one or more radial bearings, one or more thrust bearings, and a self contained lubricant system. The bearing pack may be disposed between the strippers and be housed in and connected to the catch sleeve, such as by threaded couplings and/or fasteners.

Alternatively, the bearing assembly may be non-releasably connected to the housing. Alternatively, the RCD may be located above the waterline and/or along the UMRP at any other location besides a lower end thereof. Alternatively, the RCD may be assembled as part of the riser at any location therealong or as part of the PCA. Alternatively, an active seal RCD may be used instead.

The fluid handling system **65***h* may include the cement pump (not shown), the mud pump **34**, the fluid tank **35**, the shale shaker **36**, the pressure gauge **37***k*, the cement line (not shown), the mud line **39**, the cement mixer (not shown), the booster pump **44**, the WC choke **45**, the MGS **46**, one or more pressure sensors **67**_m,r_, a return line **68**, one or more flow meters **69**_b,m,r_, a toggle valve **71**, an automated variable choke valve, such as a managed pressure (MP) choke **72**, a gas detector **73**, and one or more shutoff valves **74**_a-e_.

The mud line **39** may have the flow meter **69**_m_ and the pressure sensor **67**_m_ assembled as part thereof. An upper end of the booster line **18**_b_ may have the flow meter **69**_b_ assembled as part thereof. A lower end of the return line **68** may be connected to an outlet of the RCD **66** and an upper end of the return line may be connected to a first flow tee. The returns pressure sensor **67**_r_, the toggle valve **71**, the MP choke **72**, the returns flow meter **69**_r_, the gas detector **73**, and the first shutoff valve **74**_a_ may be assembled as part of the return line **68**. An upper end of the choke line **18**_k_ may be connected to a second flow tee and the pressure gauge **37**_k_, WC choke **45**, and the fifth shutoff valve **74**_e_ may be assembled as part thereof. A crossover spool may connect the first and second tees and have the fourth shutoff valve **74**_d_ assembled as part thereof. An MGS spool may connect the first tee and an inlet of the MGS **46** and have the second shutoff valve **74**_b_ assembled as part thereof. A shaker spool may connect the second tee to an inlet of the shaker **36** and have the fourth shutoff valve **74**_d_ and a third flow tee assembled as part thereof. A splice line may connect the third tee to a liquid outlet of the MGS **46**.

Each pressure sensor **67**_m,r_ may be in data communication with a programmable logic controller (PLC) **70**. The returns flow meter **69**_r_ may be a mass flow meter, such as a Coriolis flow meter, and may be in data communication with the PLC **70**. The returns flow meter **69**_r_ may be operable to monitor a flow rate of return fluid (drilling returns or conditioner **55**, depending on the operation being conducted). Each of the flow meters **69**_b,m_ may be a volumetric flow meter, such as a Venturi flow meter, and may be in data communication with the PLC **70**. The flow meter **69**_m_ may be operable to monitor a flow rate of the mud pump **34**. The flow meter **69**_b_ may be operable to monitor a flow rate of the booster pump **44**. The PLC **70** may have a density measurement of the conditioner **55** or chaser fluid **47** to determine a mass flow rate of the particular fluid from the volumetric measurement of the flow meters **69**_b,m_.

Alternatively, a stroke counter may be used to monitor a flow rate of the mud pump and/or booster pump instead of the volumetric flow meters. Alternatively, either or both of the volumetric flow meters may be mass flow meters.

The gas detector **73** may be operable to extract a gas sample from the return fluid to detect contamination by formation fluid (not shown) and analyze the captured sample to detect hydrocarbons and/or non-hydrocarbon components of the sample. The gas detector **73** may include a body, a probe, a chromatograph, and a carrier/purge system. The carrier/purge system may be connected to the probe and a carrier gas may be injected into the probe inlet to displace sample gas trapped therein. The carrier/purge system may then transport the sample gas to the chromatograph for analysis. The carrier purge system may also be routinely run to purge the probe of condensate. The chromatograph may be in data communication with the PLC **70** to report the analysis of the sample.

The return line **68** may further include a fourth flow tee, a bypass splice line **68**_f_, and a choke splice line **68**_k_ assembled as part thereof. The bypass splice line **68**_f_ may connect a first outlet of the toggle valve **71** to the fourth flow tee and the choke splice line **68**_k_ may connect the a second outlet of the toggle valve to the fourth flow tee and have the MP choke **72** assembled as part thereof. The MP choke **72** may include a valve **72**_v_ and a hydraulic actuator **72**_a_ operated by the PLC **70** via an HPU to generate pulses **75** during curing of the cement slurry **56**.

The toggle valve **71** may include a housing, a valve member **71**_v_, and a linear actuator **71**_a_ for moving the valve member between an upper position and a lower position. The housing may have an inlet and the first and second outlets formed through a wall thereof. The linear actuator **71**_a_ may be fast acting, such as a solenoid having a shaft connected to the valve member **71**_v_ and a coil for longitudinally driving the shaft relative to the housing between the upper and lower positions. The valve member **71**_v_ may carry seals (four shown) on an outer surface thereof for selectively opening and closing the housing outlets. The valve member **71**_v_ may have a first passage formed therethrough for opening the first outlet and a second passage formed therethrough for opening the second outlet. The first passage may be straight and straddled by the first and second seals and the second passage may be z-shaped and have an upper portion straddled by the second and third seals and a lower portion straddled by the third and fourth seals. In the upper position, the z-passage may be aligned with the inlet and second outlet while the straight passage is closed and in the lower position, the straight passage may be aligned with the inlet and first outlet while the z-passage is closed.

The MP choke **72** may be employed during drilling of the lower formation **27**_b_. The PLC **70** may periodically increase the bottomhole pressure (BHP) to a test pressure including the hydrostatic pressure of the cement slurry and the desired pulse pressure to verify integrity of the lower formation **27**_b_. The PLC **70** may increase the BHP to the test pressure by tightening the MP choke **72**. Should the lower formation **27**_b_ withstand the expected pressure, then the cementing operation may proceed as planned. Should drilling returns leak into the lower formation **27**_b_ (detected by monitoring the returns flow meter **69**_r_) during the test, then the cementing operation may have to be modified, such as by decreasing a magnitude **75**_m_ of the planned pulses **75** and/or modifying properties of the planned cement slurry **56**.

During injection of the cement slurry **56**, the MP choke **72** may be bypassed. The PLC **70** may perform a mass balance using the flow meters **69**_m_ and **69**_r_ to ensure that no fluid has been lost to the lower formation **27**_b_ or fluid from the lower formation has entered the annulus **48**. The PLC **70** may also determine the cement level in the annulus **48**.

Once injection of the cement slurry **56** has finished, a shutoff valve of the booster manifold may be opened and the booster pump **44** operated to pump conditioner **55** down the booster line **18**_b_ and into the PCA **1**_p_. The conditioner **55** may flow up the LMRP annulus and riser annulus to the RCD **66**. The conditioner **55** may be diverted by the RCD stripper seals into the return line **68**. The conditioner **55** may flow through the toggle valve **71**, the bypass splice line **68**_f_, the returns flow meter **69**_r_, the gas detector **73**, the open first shutoff valve **74**_a_, the crossover spool and open third shutoff valve **74**_c_, and the shaker spool and open fourth shutoff valve **74**_d_ into the shale shaker inlet.

As the conditioner **55** is circulated through the closed loop, the PLC **70** may periodically reciprocate the toggle valve **71** to the upper position for diverting flow through the MP choke **72** and then back to the lower position to restore flow to the bypass splice line **68**_f_, thereby generating the choke pulse **75**. The choke pulses **75** may be generated at a relatively low frequency **75**_f_, such as one pulse every fifteen seconds, thirty seconds, forty-five seconds, sixty seconds, seventy-five seconds, or ninety seconds (or any frequency therebetween). The pulse magnitude **75**_m_ may be any of the magnitudes discussed above for the heave pulse **62**. The PLC **70** may control the pulse magnitude **75***m* by adjusting a position of the MP choke **75***m* and monitoring the returns pressure sensor **67***r* for feedback.

Circulation of the conditioner **55** and pulse generation may be maintained until the entire column of the cement slurry **56** has thickened sufficiently to prevent gas migration. As the conditioner **55** is being circulated, the PLC **70** may perform a mass balance between entry and exit of the conditioner into/from the wellhead **10** to monitor for formation fluid entering the annulus **48** or cement slurry **56** entering the lower formation **27***b* using the flow meters **69***b,r*. An injection rate of the booster pump **44** may be increased in response to detection of formation fluid entering the annulus **48** and the PLC **70** may relax the MP choke **72** in response to cement slurry **56** entering the lower formation **27***b*. The CDA **9***d* may remain engaged to the casing packer **15***p* and the drill string compensator **8** may remain operational during pulsation. Once the cement slurry **56** has cured to the thickened state, casing packer **15***h* may be set and the workstring **9** retrieved to the rig **1***r*.

Alternatively, the conditioner may be circulated by an auxiliary pump connected to an inlet of the RCD instead of the booster pump. Alternatively, the RCD may be omitted, the annular BOP **30***a* closed against an outer surface of the drill pipe, and one of the choke line prongs opened as part of the closed circulation loop of the conditioner. Further in this alternative, the bypass splice line, choke splice line and toggle valve may be installed as part of the choke line **18***k* and the WC choke **45** used to generate the choke pulses.

The PLC **70** may keep a cumulative record during the cementing and pulsing operation of any fluid ingress/egress events and the PLC may make an evaluation as to the acceptability of the cured cement. The PLC **70** may also include a comparison of the actual cement level to the planned cement level in the evaluation. Should the PLC **70** determine that the cured cement is unacceptable, the PLC may make recommendations for remedial action, such as a cement bond/evaluation log and/or a secondary cementing operation.

FIGS. **7A-7C** illustrate operation of a third alternative drilling system in a cement pulsation mode during curing of the cement slurry **56**, according to another embodiment of this disclosure. The third alternative drilling system may be similar to the second alternative drilling system **65** except that a fast acting choke **76** has replaced the toggle valve **71** and the MP choke **72**.

The fast acting choke **76** may include an electric actuator, such as a servomotor **76***a*, and the valve **72***v*. The valve **72***v* may include a body, a bonnet fastened to the body, such as by threaded fasteners, a stem linked to the bonnet, such as by a lead screw, a packing sealing an interface between the stem and the bonnet, a gasket, and a seal. The body may have an inlet and outlet formed at respective longitudinal ends thereof, a chamber formed at a mid portion thereof for receiving the bonnet, and a passage connecting the inlet, outlet, and chamber. The bonnet may have a Venturi formed in an inner surface of a lower end thereof, a seal shoulder formed in an outer surface thereof adjacent to the lower end, and a discharge port formed through a wall thereof. The body may have a landing shoulder formed in an inner surface thereof adjacent to the chamber. The stem may have a flow bean formed at a lower end thereof for selectively throttling the Venturi. The stem and Venturi may be made from an erosion resistant material. The stem may have a torsional coupling formed at an upper end thereof for rotary driving by the servomotor.

The servomotor **76***a* may include a driver **78** and a motor **79**. The motor **79** may include a rotor, a stator, and a pair of bearings supporting the rotor for rotation relative to the stator. The rotor may include a hub made from a magnetically permeable material, a plurality of permanent magnets torsionally connected to the hub, and a shaft. The rotor may include one or more pairs of permanent magnets having opposite polarities. The magnets may also be fastened to the hub, such as by retainers. The hub may be torsionally connected to the shaft and fastened thereto. The stator may include a housing, a core, and a plurality of windings, such as three (only two shown). The core may include a stack of laminations made from an electrically permeable material. The stack may have lobes formed therein, each lobe for receiving a respective winding. The core may be longitudinally and torsionally connected to the housing, such as by an interference fit.

Alternatively, the motor **79** may be a switched reluctance motor instead of a brushless permanent magnet motor.

The motor driver **78** may include a rectifier **78***r*, a motor controller **78***c*, and a rotor position sensor (not shown). The motor driver **78** may receive a three phase alternating current (AC) power signal from a generator **40** of the MODU **1***m*. The rectifier **78***r* may convert the three phase AC power signal to a direct current (DC) power signal and supply the converted DC power signal to the motor controller **78***c*. The motor controller **78***c* may have an output for each phase (i.e., three) of the motor **10** and may monitor may modulate the DC power signal to drive each phase winding of the stator based on signals received from the rotor position sensor.

The fast acting choke **76** may impart the capability to the third alternative drilling system to exert back pressure during injection and pulsing of the cement slurry **56** such that a density of the cement slurry **56** may correspond to a minimum allowable pressure gradient, such as pore pressure gradient, of the lower formation **27***b*. As the conditioner **55** is circulated, the PLC **70** may periodically reciprocate the choke **76** from a looser position, where only back pressure is exerted on the conditioner **55** to a tighter position and then back to the looser position, thereby generating the choke pulse **75** in addition to the back pressure. The PLC **70** may also perform the mass balance during injection of the cement slurry **56** and during circulation of the conditioner **55** for pulsing to evaluate acceptability, as discussed above. The PLC **70** may relax the fast acting choke **76** if fluid loss is detected during injection of the cement slurry **56** and relax the tighter position if fluid loss is detected during pulsing. The PLC **70** may tighten the fast acting choke **76** if formation fluid is detected during injection of the cement slurry **56** and tighten the looser position if formation fluid is detected during pulsing.

Alternatively, a second MP choke may be added to the bypass splice line **68***f* of the second alternative drilling system **65** to achieve back pressure capability by setting the first MP choke to generate the back pressure plus the choke pulse and the second MP choke to generate only the back pressure.

FIGS. **8**A-**8**G illustrate operation of a fourth alternative drilling system **80** in a cement pulsation mode during curing of the cement slurry **56**, according to another embodiment of this disclosure. The drilling system **80** may include the MODU **1***m*, the drilling rig **1***r*, a fluid handling system **80***h*, a fluid transport system **80***t*, the PCA **1***p*, and the workstring **9**. The fluid transport system **80***t* may include an UMRP **80***u*, the marine riser **17**, the booster line **18***b*, and the choke line **18***k*. The UMRP **80***u* may include the diverter **19**, the flex joint **20**, the slip joint **21**, the tensioner **22**, an RCD **66**, a heave sensor **82**, and a heave relief system **81**.

The heave sensor **82** may be installed in the slip joint **21** and be in data communication with the PLC **70**. The heave sensor

82 may be a linear variable differential transformer (LVDT) having an outer portion mounted in the outer barrel and a ferromagnetic target ring mounted on a shoulder of the inner barrel. The outer portion may include a central primary coil and a pair of secondary coils straddling the primary coil. The primary coil may be driven by an AC signal and the secondary coils monitored for response signals which may vary in response to a position of the target ring relative to the outer portion.

The heave relief system **81** may include a relief vessel **81***a* and a flow line connecting the relief vessel to an outlet of the RCD **66**. A pressure sensor **81***p* and a shutoff valve **81***v* may be assembled as part of the relief line. The shutoff valve **81***v* and pressure sensor **81***p* may be in communication with the PLC **70**. The shutoff valve **81***v* may be normally closed unless the PLC **70** detects the occurrence of a rogue wave. In such an event, the PLC **70** may open the shutoff valve **81***v* to allow the fluid displaced by the drill pipe **9***p* to be relieved to the vessel **81***a* to avoid overpressuring the lower formation **27***b*.

The fluid handling system **80***h* may include the cement pump (not shown), the mud pump **34**, the fluid tank **35**, the shale shaker **36**, the pressure gauge **37***k*, the cement line (not shown), the mud line **39**, the cement mixer (not shown), the booster pump **44**, the WC choke **45**, the MGS **46**, the pressure sensors **67***m,r*, a return line **83**, the flow meters **69***b,m,r*, the fast acting choke **76**, the gas detector **73**, the shutoff valves **74***a-e*, and a hydraulic circuit **84**. A lower end of the return line **83** may be connected to an outlet of the RCD **66** and an upper end of the return line may be connected to the first flow tee. The returns pressure sensor **67***r*, the fast acting choke **76**, the returns flow meter **69***r*, the gas detector **73**, the first shutoff valve **74***a*, and fourth and fifth flow tees may be assembled as part of the return line **83**.

The hydraulic circuit **84** may include the check valve **59**, a compensator toggle valve **71**, an intensifier choke **72**, a compensation spool **84***c*, a discharge line **84***d*, a pulse spool **84***p*, a loop spool **84***r*, a supply line **84***s*, an input spool **84***t*, a fluid tank **85** filled with conditioner **55**, an auxiliary pump **86**, a fast acting pulse shutoff valve **87**, a pulse flow meter **88***p*, and a compensator flow meter **88***c*. The supply line **84***s* may connect an outlet of the tank **85** with an inlet of the auxiliary pump **86**. The discharge line **84***d* may connect an outlet of the auxiliary pump **86** and a sixth flow tee.

The input spool **84***t* may connect the sixth flow tee to an inlet of the compensator valve **71** and have the intensifier choke **72** may be assembled as part thereof. The compensator spool **84***c* may connect a first outlet of the compensator valve **71** to the fifth tee and have the check valve **59** and compensator flow meter **88***c* assembled as part thereof. The check valve **59** may be oriented to allow flow from the compensator valve **71** to the return line **83** and prevent reverse flow from the return line **83** to the compensator valve **71**. The loop spool **84***r* may connect a second outlet of the compensator valve **71** to an inlet of the fluid tank **85**. The pulse spool **84***p* may connect the sixth tee to the fourth tee of the return line **83** and have the pulse valve **87** and the pulse flow meter **88***p* assembled as part thereof.

Referring specifically to FIG. **8**C, once injection of the cement slurry **56** has finished, the bayonet connection between the CDA **9***d* and the inner casing string **15** may be released. The cementing head **7** (minus the isolation valve **6**) may be removed and the workstring **9** connected to the isolation valve **6** and raised to create sufficient clearance between the equalization valve **52** and the casing hanger **15***h* to accommodate the heave **60** of the workstring **9**. The spider **4***s* may then be operated to engage the drill pipe **9***p*, thereby longitudinally supporting the workstring **9** from the rig floor **4***f*.

Referring specifically to FIGS. **8**D and **8**E, the auxiliary pump **86** may be activated to circulate conditioner **55** through the input spool **84***t* and loop spool **84***r*. The booster pump **44** may be left idle (depicted in phantom). The PLC **70** may utilize the heave sensor **82** to operate the fast acting choke **76** to dampen the heave pulse **62***d* by tightening the fast acting choke during a swab stroke of the heave **60** and relaxing the fast acting choke during a surge stroke of the heave. Even using the fast acting choke **76**, there may be some latency (slight lag shown in FIG. **8**D) between the fast acting choke position and the heave **60**. To maintain the ability of the fast acting choke **76** to exert back pressure during a swab stroke of the heave **60**, the PLC **70** may switch the compensator valve **71** to inject conditioner **55** into the return line **83** during the swab stroke. Once the swab stroke has finished, the PLC **70** may switch the compensator valve **71** back to discharging the conditioner **55** to the fluid tank **85**.

Alternatively, the PLC **70** may monitor heaving **60** during injection of the cement slurry **56** to construct a predicted heave model and use the predicted heave model to control the fast acting choke and the compensator valve **71**.

Referring specifically to FIGS. **8**F and **8**G, as the conditioner **55** is circulated, the intensifier valve **72** may be set to maintain a substantially higher pressure in the pulse spool **84***p* than the compensation **84***c* and return **84***r* spools. The PLC **70** may periodically reciprocate the pulse valve **87** to open and then close, thereby diverting the higher pressure flow of conditioner **55** into the return line **83** against the fast acting choke **76** and generating the choke pulse **75**. The choke pulses **75** may be generated at any of the frequencies and magnitudes discussed above. The pulse frequency may be independent of the heave frequency and may even occasionally coincide with opening of the compensator valve **71** to the return line **83**. The PLC **70** may control the pulse magnitude by adjusting a position of the intensifier choke **72** and/or time that the pulse valve **87** is kept open and monitoring the returns pressure sensor **67***r* for feedback. The PLC **70** may control pulse frequency by adjusting the reciprocation period of the pulse valve **87**.

The actual pressure exerted on the cement slurry **56** may be a cumulative effect of the dampened heave pulse **62***d*, the hydrostatic pressure of the conditioner **55** in the annulus **48**, the PCA annulus, and the riser annulus, and the choke pulses **75**. The dampened heave pulse **62***d* may cause variation in the effective pulse magnitude exerted on the cement slurry **56**; however, the PLC **70** may ensure that the effective magnitude during the swab stroke is still greater than or equal to the required pulse magnitude while also ensuring the actual pressure does not exceed the maximum allowable pressure of the lower formation **27***b*.

Circulation of the conditioner **55** and pulse generation may be maintained until the entire column of the cement slurry **56** has thickened sufficiently to prevent gas migration. As the conditioner **55** is being circulated, the PLC **70** may perform the mass balance using the heave sensor **82** to account for displaced volume by the heave **60** and the flow meters **69***r*, **88***c*, **88***p* to monitor for formation fluid entering the annulus **48** or cement slurry **56** entering the lower formation **27***b* to evaluate acceptability, as discussed above. Once the cement slurry **56** has cured to the thickened state, the CDA **9***d* may be reengaged with the casing packer **15***h*, the casing packer may be set, and the workstring **9** retrieved to the rig **1***r*.

Alternatively, an accumulator may be used to supply the conditioner to the return line for generation of the pulses instead of the pulse spool. Alternatively, the RCD may be omitted and the diverter closed against the workstring instead.

FIG. **9** illustrates cement pulsation during curing of a temporary abandonment cement plug **93**, according to another embodiment of this disclosure. The CDA **9***d* may removed from the workstring **9** and replaced by a stinger **92**. The workstring **9***p*, **92** may be redeployed until the stinger **92** is located adjacent to the casing hanger **15***h*. Spacer fluid **94** may be pumped into the workstring **9***p*, **92** followed by the cement slurry **93**. Chaser fluid (not shown) may be pumped into the workstring **9***p*, **92** to propel the cement slurry **93** and spacer fluid **94** through the stinger **92** until a level of the cement slurry in the inner casing string **15** is equal to a level of the cement slurry in the stinger (aka balanced plug). The drill pipe **9***p* may be raised to remove the stinger **92** from the cement slurry **93** and the cement slurry choke pulsed **75** until it has thickened sufficiently to prevent gas migration. The choke pulses **75** may be generated using any of the second, third, or fourth alternative drilling systems. Once the slurry **93** has thickened, the workstring **9***p*, **92** may be retrieved to the rig. The PCA **1***p* and riser string **17** may be retrieved to the rig and the MODU **1***m* dispatched from the wellsite. An intervention vessel (not shown) may then to be sent to the wellsite for completion of the wellbore **24**.

Alternatively, the curing cement slurry **93** may be pulsed using heave pulses generated by the drilling system **1** or the first alternative drilling system.

FIG. **10** illustrates cement pulsation of curing cement slurry **56** in an annulus **95** of a liner string **90**, according to another embodiment of this disclosure. A liner deployment assembly (LDA) **89** may be used to deploy the liner string **90** instead of the CDA **9***d*. The liner string **90** may include a polished bore receptacle (PBR) **90***r*, a packer **90***p*, a liner hanger **90***h*, a mandrel **90***m* for carrying the hanger and packer, joints of liner **90***j*, a landing collar **90***c*, and a reamer shoe **90***s*. The mandrel **90***m*, liner joints **90***j*, landing collar **90***c*, and reamer shoe **90***s* may be interconnected, such as by threaded couplings.

The LDA **89** may include a setting tool **89***b,o,p,s*, a running tool **89***r*, a catcher **89***t*, and a plug release system **89***e,g*. An upper end of the setting tool **89***b,o,p,s* may be connected to a lower end the drill pipe **9***p*, such as by threaded couplings. A lower end of the setting tool **89***b,o,p,s* may be fastened to an upper end of the running tool **89***r*. The running tool **89***r* may also be releasably connected to the mandrel **90***m*. An upper end of the catcher **89***t* may be connected to a lower end of the running tool **89***r* and a lower end of the catcher may be connected to an upper end of the plug release system **89***e,g*, such as by threaded couplings.

For deployment of the liner string **90**, a junk bonnet **89***b* of the setting tool **89***b,o,p,s* may be engaged with and close an upper end of the PBR **90***r*, thereby forming an upper end of a buffer chamber. A lower end of the buffer chamber may be formed by a sealed interface between a packoff **89***o* of the setting tool **89***b,o,p,s* and the PBR **90***r*. The buffer chamber may be filled with a buffer fluid (not shown), such as fresh water, refined/synthetic oil, or other liquid. The buffer chamber may prevent infiltration of debris from the wellbore **24** from obstructing operation of the LDA **9***d*.

The setting tool **89***b,o,p,s* may include a hydraulic actuator **89***p* for setting the liner hanger **90***h* and a mechanical actuator **89***s* for setting the liner packer **90***p*. The cementing head **7** may be modified for use with the LDA **89** by replacing one of the release plug launchers with a setting plug launcher. The setting plug may be a ball **91***b* pumped down the workstring **9***p*, **89** to the catcher **89***t*. The catcher **89***t* may be a mechanical ball seat including a body and a seat fastened to the body, such as by one or more shearable fasteners. The seat may also be linked to the body by a cam and follower. Once the ball **91***b* is caught, the seat may be released from the body by a threshold pressure exerted on the ball. The threshold pressure may be greater than a pressure required to set the liner hanger **90***h*, unlock the running tool **53**, and release the junk bonnet **89***b*. Once the seated ball has been released, the seat and ball **91***b* may swing relative to the body into a capture chamber, thereby reopening the LDA bore.

Once the liner hanger **90***h* has been set against an inner surface of a lower portion, such as the bottom, of the outer casing string **25** and the running tool **89***r* unlocked, the workstring **9***p*, **89** may be rotated, thereby releasing a floating nut of the running tool from a threaded profile of the mandrel **90***m*. The workstring **9***p*, **89** may be raised to verify successful release and lowered to torsionally engage the LDA **9***d* with the liner string **90** for rotation during pumping of the cement slurry **56**. The cement slurry **56** may be pumped followed by a dart **91***d* to release the wiper plug **89***g* from the plug release system **89***e,g*. Once pumping of the cement slurry **56** has finished, the cementing head (minus the isolation valve) may be removed and the workstring **9***p*, **89** connected to the isolation valve and raised to create sufficient clearance between the equalization valve **89***e* and the liner hanger **90***h* to accommodate the heave **60** of the workstring **9**. The spider **4***s* may then be operated to engage the drill pipe **9***p*, thereby longitudinally supporting the workstring **9** from the rig floor **4***f*. The cement slurry **56** may be pulsed **75** and pulse generation may be maintained until the entire column of the cement slurry **56** has thickened sufficiently to prevent gas migration. The LDA **89** may then be lowered until the mechanical actuator **89***s* engages the liner packer **90***p* and lowering may continue to set the liner packer.

The pulsation **75** of the cement slurry **56** in the liner annulus **95** may be performed using the second, third, or fourth alternative drilling systems. Alternatively, the curing cement slurry **56** in the liner annulus **95** may be pulsed using heave pulses generated by the drilling system **1** or the first alternative drilling system.

While the foregoing is directed to embodiments of the present disclosure, other and further embodiments of the disclosure may be devised without departing from the basic scope thereof, and the scope of the invention is determined by the claims that follow.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for cementing a tubular string into a wellbore from a drilling unit, comprising:
- running the tubular string into the wellbore using a workstring;
- hanging the tubular string from a wellhead or from a lower portion of a casing string set in the wellbore;
- pumping cement slurry through the workstring and tubular string and into an annulus formed between the tubular string and the wellbore; and
- during thickening of the cement slurry:
  - circulating a liquid or mud through a loop closed by a seal engaged with an outer surface of the workstring, the closed loop being in fluid communication with the annulus, and
  - periodically choking the liquid or mud, thereby pulsing the cement slurry.

2. The method of claim **1**, wherein the cement slurry is pulsated until the cement slurry has sufficiently thickened to prevent gas migration.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the liquid or mud is choked by operating a fast acting toggle valve having an outlet connected to a choke valve and an outlet connected to a bypass line.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the liquid or mud is choked by operating a fast acting choke valve.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising performing a mass balance during thickening of the cement slurry, wherein the performing a mass balance comprises:

monitoring a plurality of flow meters for flow measurements; and

comparing the flow measurements to detect a fluid ingress or egress into a formation exposed to the annulus.

6. The method of claim 5, further comprising using the mass balance to evaluate acceptability of the thickened cement, wherein acceptability comprises the cement slurry has sufficiently thickened to prevent gas migration.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising setting a packer of the tubular string after thickening of the cement slurry.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising rotating the tubular string during pumping of the cement slurry.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein:

the method further comprises conditioning the wellbore with a liquid or mud before pumping the cement slurry, and

the cement slurry is pumped using a liquid or mud chaser fluid.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the tubular string is an inner casing string.

11. The method of claim 10, further comprising:

spotting cement slurry in a bore of the inner casing string adjacent to the subsea wellhead; and

pulsing the spotted cement slurry during thickening thereof.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the tubular string is a liner string.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein:

the wellbore is a subsea wellbore,

the wellhead is a subsea wellhead, and

the drilling unit is an offshore drilling unit.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the workstring is suspended from a top drive of the offshore drilling unit during pulsation.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein:

the tubular string is run into the subsea wellbore through a marine riser,

the seal is part of a rotating control device (RCD), and

the RCD is part of an upper marine riser package connecting the marine riser to

the offshore drilling unit.

16. A method for cementing a tubular string into a subsea wellbore from an offshore drilling unit, comprising:

running the tubular string into the subsea wellbore using a workstring;

hanging the tubular string from a subsea wellhead or from a lower portion of a casing string set in the subsea wellbore;

pumping cement slurry through the workstring and tubular string and into an annulus formed between the tubular string and the subsea wellbore;

closing a seal against an outer surface of the workstring and closing a return line, thereby forming a closed heave chamber in fluid communication with the annulus; and

maintaining the closed heave chamber during thickening of the cement slurry, thereby utilizing heaving of the offshore drilling unit to pulsate the cement slurry.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the seal is closed against the outer surface of the workstring after pumping the cement slurry.

18. The method of claim 16, further comprising:

releasing a deployment assembly of the workstring from the tubular string;

raising the deployment assembly from the tubular string to accommodate the heave; and

anchoring the workstring to the offshore drilling unit during pulsation.

19. The method of claim 16, wherein:

the seal is a dynamic seal, and

the workstring is suspended from a top drive of the offshore drilling unit during pulsation.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein:

the dynamic seal is part of a rotating control device (RCD) converter, and

the dynamic seal is closed by installing the RCD converter in a diverter of the offshore drilling unit.

21. The method of claim 16, further comprising, immediately after forming the heave chamber, exerting a back pressure on the annulus and sealing the annulus with the exerted back pressure.

22. A method for cementing a tubular string into a subsea wellbore from an offshore drilling unit, comprising:

running the tubular string into the subsea wellbore using a workstring having a deployment assembly;

hanging the tubular string from a subsea wellhead or from a lower portion of a casing string set in the subsea wellbore;

pumping cement slurry through the workstring and tubular string and into an annulus formed between the tubular string and the subsea wellbore;

releasing the deployment assembly from the tubular string;

raising the deployment assembly from the tubular string to accommodate heave;

anchoring the workstring to the offshore drilling unit; and

during thickening of the cement slurry and while a seal is engaged with an outer surface of the workstring:

using a heave sensor to monitor the heave,

injecting liquid or mud into a return line in fluid communication with the annulus during a swab stroke of the heave, the liquid or mud being injected upstream of a fast acting choke valve, and

operating the fast acting choke valve to dampen a pulse exerted on the cement slurry by the heave.

23. The method of claim 22, further comprising periodically injecting the liquid or mud into the return line upstream of the fast acting choke valve, thereby pulsing the cement slurry.

24. The method of claim 22, wherein:

the tubular string is run into the subsea wellbore through a marine riser, and an upper marine riser package (UMRP) connects the marine riser to the offshore drilling unit.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein the heave sensor is part of a slip joint of the UMRP.

26. The method of claim 24, wherein:

the seal is part of a rotating control device (RCD), and

the RCD is part of the UMRP located below the slip joint.

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